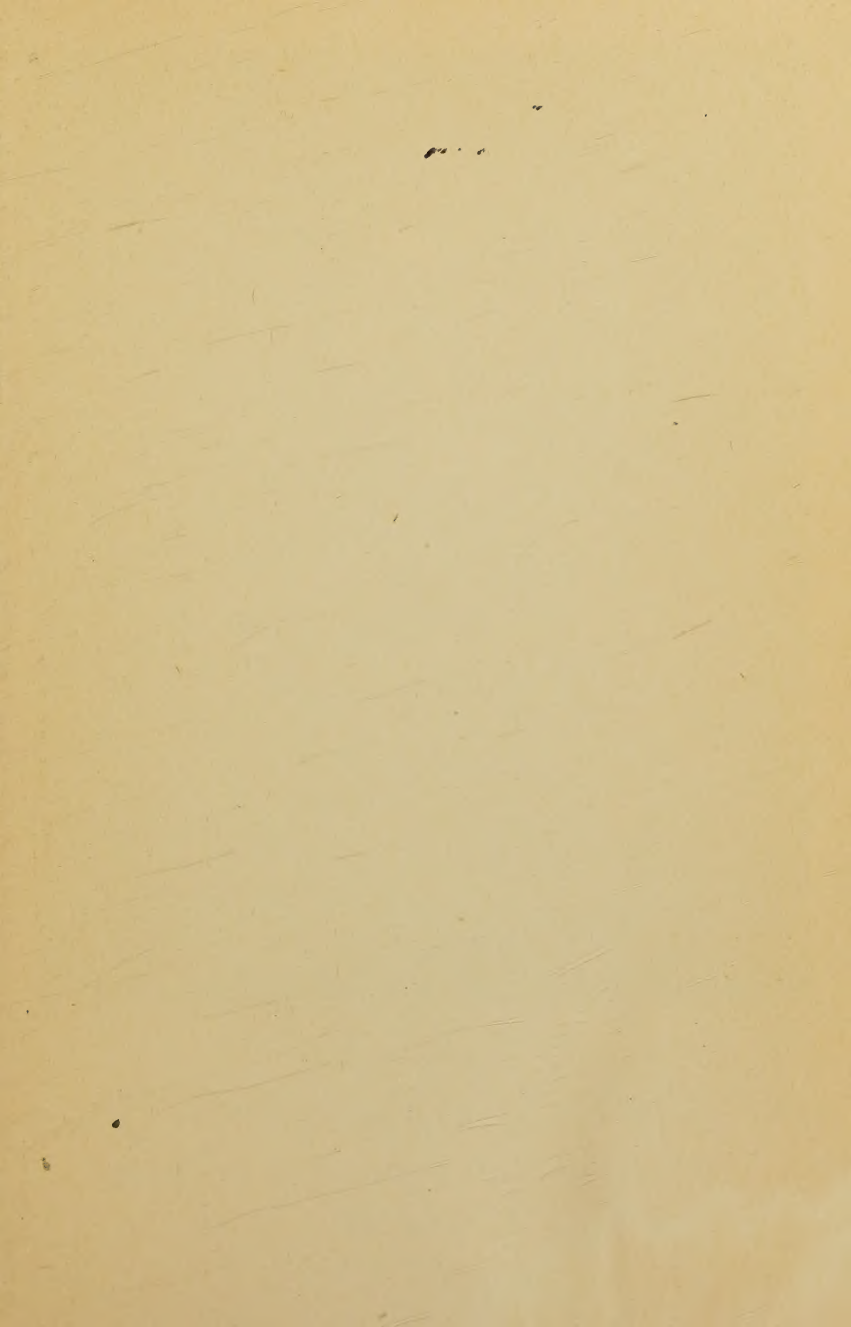




A Selection of the Letters of
HORACE WALPOLE





J. Reynolds pinxit

L. M. Ardel sculpsit 1787

Horace Walpole
Youngest Son of S^r Rob^t Walpole Earl of Orford.

A SELECTION
OF THE LETTERS OF
HORACE WALPOLE

Edited by W. S. LEWIS



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A Selection of the Letters of
HORACE WALPOLE

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TO
PROFESSOR CHAUNCEY BREWSTER TINKER

My dear Mr. Tinker,

It may seem odd that a book whose hero is Horace Walpole should be inscribed to the champion of James Boswell, but in the language of dedications, 'Without you this book would never have been written.' Nor does your responsibility for it go back merely to the morning when you suggested the doing of it, but to that morning, twelve years ago, when I entered my first class in Yale College, found you the instructor of it,

and so became

Your humble and devoted servant,

W. S. LEWIS

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

THE text of the letters is that in Mrs. Paget Toynbee's edition. With a few exceptions I have printed the letters *in toto*. The exceptions are letters of unusual length, a considerable part of which are less interesting. I have indicated the omissions wherever they occur.

The notes followed by a T. are Mrs. Toynbee's, and I am indebted to the Oxford University Press and to Dr. Paget Toynbee for permission to use them. My thanks are also due to Mr. Arthur Case of Yale University for suggestions in the difficult selecting of the letters.

INTRODUCTION

BOOKS of this kind must have an Introduction—for the few who read Introductions. The editor is expected to step nervously forward in a prologue and justify his company as best he may; and though in the present case nothing could be easier, this prologue will not attempt to cry up the charm and importance of Horace Walpole. The most indifferent reader may discover the first at a glance. To define and analyze his importance would be to rob the more thoughtful of a gradually unfolding pleasure. Walpole's letters have often been likened to a novel; the pleasure of following the slow development of his life is akin to that given by the greatest novels. That being so, it would be a pity to give it all away before the beginning, although, as a concession, I have placed after this Introduction a long extract from his *Short Notes of My Life*.

The letters have been chosen from the whole range of Walpole's life, from his nineteenth to his eightieth year. Nearly thirty-five hundred letters have been published, and the difficulties of choosing one hundred and fifty or so from such a number are obvious. The present editor has been guided by various motives: the desire to show a few great moments in the century and a few of its most characteristic people through the eyes of its wittiest chronicler. He has, above all, been anxious to show the character and personality of Horace Walpole.

Walpole has been unfairly treated. Nearly a hundred

INTRODUCTION

years ago Macaulay dispatched him in a brilliant and querulous essay. Walpole himself never sank to the spitefulness of that attack. Spitefulness and a fear of ridicule may be found in the following letters, but so also may be found loyalty and generosity and thoughtfulness and courage and independence. Walpole's many interests—social, political, literary, artistic, antiquarian, printing, 'collecting'—gave him the widest theater on which to exercise his extraordinary gifts of observation and his tireless appreciation of the *comédie humaine*. His method may be said to have been the opposite of James Boswell's. Boswell took one man and with him illuminated the surrounding scene; Walpole began with the surrounding scene and illuminated one man—himself. It may be the highest tribute that we can pay him when we say that he does not suffer when brought into focus with the magnificent panorama of his time.

Probably no editor of 'Selections' has ever done his somewhat graceless task without hoping (if his heart is at all in it) that he may be the means, with his island-like selections, of some reader reaching the mainland. The mainland in this case extends to nineteen volumes, which, at first, may seem too many. The surprising unavailability of approaches to it like the present has left it quite uncharted for even the well-read 'general reader.' Critics of the eighteenth century have had to approach it, for nowhere else may be found so large a section of the time, but they have too often been content, with the notes of Macaulay's extravaganza in their ears, with snatching hasty bouquets from the garden beds along the shore. Those who have, in a different spirit, ventured boldly inland,

INTRODUCTION

have been rewarded by hours and hours of entertainment. They have found it a varied land. Life is abundant there; it is easy and it is amusing; and if it is not quite Arcadia, if the vegetation even when in 'full greenth' has a suggestion of the sere along its nether surfaces—why, it only serves to emphasize its kinship with our own world and to increase our appreciation of it.

'You have,' sums up Professor Saintsbury, 'been "in society"; society sometimes a little unedifying, but never very bad, and almost always amusing. You have the key of it, and you can return when you like and have time.' And again, 'If the old game of selecting a thirdsman for "The Bible and Shakespeare" in a library of three were resuscitated, Horace Walpole's Letters might be, by no means in mere joke, put forward as a candidate. It is certainly a striking contrast to the other two, and it cannot be said to duplicate anything that they contain. But it supplies the mere pastime which one of them at least does not pretend to offer, and almost everything in which it is wanting or faulty one or other of them will furnish or correct.'

SHORT NOTES OF MY LIFE

by Horace Walpole

I WAS born in Arlington Street, near St. James's, London, September 24th, 1717, O.S.

I was inoculated for the small-pox in 1724.

April 26th, 1727, I went to Eton School, where Mr. Henry Bland, (since Prebendary of Durham), eldest son of Dr. Henry Bland, Master of the School, and since Dean of Durham and Provost of Eton, was my tutor.

I was entered at Lincoln's Inn, May 27th, 1731, my father intending me for the law; but I never went thither, not caring for the profession.

I left Eton School September 23rd, 1734; and March 11th, 1735, went to King's College, Cambridge.

My mother died August 20th, 1737.

Soon after, my father gave me the place of Inspector of the Imports and Exports in the Custom House, which I resigned on his appointing me Usher of the Exchequer, in the room of Colonel William Townshend, January 29th, 1738—and as soon as I came of age, I took possession of two other little patent-places in the Exchequer, called Comptroller of the Pipe, and Clerk of the Estreats.

My father's second wife, Mrs. Maria Skerret, died June, 1738.

I had continued at Cambridge, though with long intervals, till towards the end of 1738, and did not leave it in form till

1739, in which year, March 10th, I set out on my travels with my friend Mr. Thomas Gray, and went to Paris. From thence, after a stay of about two months, we went with my cousin Henry Conway to Rheims, in Champagne, stayed there three months; and passing by Geneva, where we left Mr. Conway, Mr. Gray and I went by Lyons to Turin, over the Alps, and from thence to Genoa, Parma, Placentia, Modena, Bologna, and Florence. There we stayed three months, chiefly for the sake of Mr. Horace Mann, the English Minister. Clement the Twelfth dying while we were in Italy, we went to Rome in the end of March, 1740, to see the election of the new Pope; but the Conclave continuing and the heats coming on, we (after an excursion to Naples) returned in June to Florence, where we continued in the house of Mr. Mann till May of the following year, 1741, when we went to the fair of Reggio. There Mr. Gray left me, going to Venice with Mr. Francis Whithed and Mr. John Chute, for the festival of the Ascension. I fell ill at Reggio of a kind of quinsy, and was given over for five hours, escaping with great difficulty.

I went to Venice with Henry Clinton, Earl of Lincoln, and Mr. Joseph Spence, Professor of Poetry, and after a month's stay there, returned with them by sea from Genoa, landing at Antibes, and by the way of Toulon, Marseilles, Aix, and through Languedoc to Montpellier, Toulouse, and Orleans, arrived at Paris, where I left the Earl and Mr. Spence, and landed at Dover, September 12th, 1741, O. S., having been chosen Member of Parliament, for Kellington, in Cornwall, at the preceding General Election, which Parliament put a

period to my father's administration, which had continued above twenty years.

February 9th, 1743, my father resigned, and was created Earl of Orford. He left the house in Downing Street belonging to the Exchequer, and retired to one in Arlington Street, opposite to that in which I was born, and which stood where the additional building to Mr. Pelham's house now stands.

March 23rd, 1742, I spoke in the House of Commons for the first time, against the motion for a Secret Committee on my father. This speech was published in the magazines, but was entirely false, and had not one paragraph of my real speech in it.

My father died March 28th, 1745. He left me the house in Arlington Street in which he died, 5,000*l.* in money, and 1,000*l.* a year from the Collector's place in the Custom House, and the surplus to be divided between my brother Edward and me.

In August I took a house within the precincts of the Castle of Windsor.

In 1747 I printed my account of the collection at Houghton, under the title of *Aedes Walpolianæ*. It had been drawn up in the year of 1743. I printed but two hundred copies, to give away.

In May, 1747, I took a small house near Twickenham, for seven years. I afterwards bought it, by Act of Parliament, it belonging to minors; and have made great additions and improvements to it. In one of the deeds I found it was called Strawberry Hill.

In 1748 were published, in Dodsley's *Collection of Mis-*

cellaneous Poems, three of mine: an *Epistle to Mr. Ashton from Florence* (written in 1740), *The Beauties*, and the *Epilogue to Tamerlane*.

One night in the beginning of November, 1749, as I was returning from Holland House by moonlight, about ten at night, I was attacked by two highwaymen in Hyde Park, and the pistol of one of them going off accidentally razed the skin under my eye, left some marks of shot on my face, and stunned me. The ball went through the top of the chariot, and if I had sat an inch nearer to the left side, must have gone through my head.

January 11th, 1751, I moved the Address to the King, on his Speech at the opening of the Session.

About this time I began to write my *Memoirs*. At first, I only intended to write the history of one year.

Feb. 8, 1753, was published a paper I had written in a periodical work, called the *World*, published by E. Moore. I wrote eight more numbers, besides two that were not printed then; and one containing a character of Mr. Fox, which I had written some years before.

This year I published a fine edition of *Six Poems of Mr. Gray, with Prints from Designs of Mr. R. Bentley*.

In March, 1755, I was very ill used by my nephew Lord Orford, upon a contested election in the House of Commons, on which I wrote him a long letter, with an account of my own conduct in politics.

In Feb. 1757, I vacated my seat for Castlerising in order to be chosen for Lynn; and about the same time used my best endeavours, but in vain, to save the unfortunate Admiral Byng.

SHORT NOTES OF MY LIFE

June 25th, I erected a printing-press at my house at Strawberry Hill.

Aug. 8th, I published *Two Odes by Mr. Gray*, the first production of my press.

In Sept. I erected a tomb in St. Anne's Churchyard, Soho, for Theodore, King of Corsica.

In Oct. 1757, was finished at my press an edition of Hentznerus, translated by Mr. Bentley, to which I wrote an advertisement. I dedicated it to the Society of Antiquaries, of which I am a member, as well as of the Royal Society.

In April, 1758, was finished the first impression of my *Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors*, which I had written the preceding year in less than five months.

March 17 (1759), I began to distribute some copies of my *Fugitive Pieces*, collected and printed together at Strawberry Hill, and dedicated to General Conway.

1760. Jan. 1st. I began the lives of English Artists, from Vertue's MSS. (that is, *Anecdotes of Painting*, &c).

1761. June 12th. I was attacked in a new weekly paper, No. 2, called the *North Briton*, and accused of having *flattered* the Scotch in my *Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors*.

1764. I began *The Castle of Otranto*, a Gothic story, and finished it Aug. 6th.

Dec. 24th. *The Castle of Otranto* was published; 500 copies.

1765. April 11th. The 2nd edition of *The Castle of Otranto*; 500 copies.

Sept. 9th. Set out for Paris.

1766. April 22nd. Arrived in London, from Paris.

SHORT NOTES OF MY LIFE

Aug. 18th. Began *Memoirs of the Reign of George the Third*.

1767. March 13th. Wrote to the Mayor of Lynn, that I did not intend to come into Parliament again.

Aug. 20th. I went to Paris. Wrote there an account of my whole concern in the affair of Rousseau, not with intention to publish it yet.

1768. Feb. 1. Published my *Historic Doubts on Richard the Third*.

March 15. I finished a tragedy called *The Mysterious Mother*, which I had begun Dec. 25th, 1766.

June 20. Received a letter from Voltaire desiring my *Historic Doubts*. I sent them, and *The Castle of Otranto*, that he might see the preface, of which I told him. He did not like it, but returned a very civil answer, defending his opinion. I replied with more civility, but dropping the subject, not caring to enter into a controversy; especially on a matter of opinion, on which, whether we were right or wrong, all France would be on his side, and all England on mine.

1769. April 24. Mrs. Clive spoke an epilogue I had written for her on her quitting the stage.

1772. Finished my *Memoirs*, which conclude with the year 1771; intending for the future only to carry on a Journal.

Sept. 16. The Duke of Gloucester notified to the King his marriage with my niece Lady Waldegrave.

1774. Wrote an introduction to, and a parody of, Lord Chesterfield's three first Letters.

1777. In April my nephew, Lord Orford, went mad again, and was under my care, but as he had employed a lawyer, of

SHORT NOTES OF MY LIFE

whom I had a bad opinion, in his affairs, I refused to take care of them.

1778. Lord Orford recovering in March, I gave up the care of him.

1779. In the preceding autumn had written a defence of myself against the unjust aspersions in the Preface of the *Miscellanies* of Chatterton. Printed 200 copies at Strawberry Hill this January, and gave them away. It was much enlarged from what I had written in July.

(The continuation of these notes was supplied by
Mrs. Paget Toynbee)

1779. February. Sale of the Houghton pictures to the Empress of Russia.

August. Walpole concluded the purchase of a house in Berkeley Square, which was his town house until his death.

1780. Death, at Paris, of Walpole's friend and correspondent, Madame du Deffand, aged eighty-three. She bequeathed to Walpole her MSS., and her dog, 'Tonton'.

1781. Walpole published his tragedy, *The Mysterious Mother*, in order to put a stop to the issue of a pirated edition.

November. Production at Covent Garden of Robert Jephson's tragedy, *The Count of Narbonne*, founded upon Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*.

1786. November. Death, at Florence, of Walpole's friend, Sir Horace Mann, with whom he had corresponded for forty-five years.

1788. Beginning of Walpole's intimate friendship with Miss Mary and Miss Agnes Berry.

SHORT NOTES OF MY LIFE

1791. December. Walpole succeeded to the Earldom of Orford on the death of his nephew, the third Earl.

During 1791 he made over the house and grounds of Little Strawberry Hill to Miss Mary and Miss Agnes Berry.

1793-1796. Horace Walpole (now Earl of Orford) during these years suffered from constant attacks of gout. His time was chiefly passed in the company of the Miss Berrys, or in corresponding with them during their absence.

1797. Horace Walpole, Fourth Earl of Orford, died in his house in Berkeley Square in his eightieth year.

A Selection of the Letters of
HORACE WALPOLE

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*1. To George Montagu*¹

[*Ætæt* 18]

King's College

May 6, 1736

Dear George,—I agree with you entirely in the pleasure you take in talking over old stories, but can't say but I meet every day with new circumstances, which will be still more pleasure to me to recollect. I think at our age 'tis excess of joy, to think, while we are running over past happinesses, that it is still in our power to enjoy as great. Narrations of the greatest actions of other people, are tedious in comparison of the serious trifles, that every man can call to mind of himself, while he was learning those histories. Youthful passages of life are the chippings of Pitt's diamond,² set into little heart-rings with mottos; the stone itself more worth, the filings more gentle and agreeable. Alexander at the head of the world never tasted the true pleasure that boys of his own age have enjoyed at the head of a school. Little intrigues, little schemes, and policies, engage their thoughts, and at the same time that they
are

¹ George Montagu (d. 1780), sometime member for Northampton. His friendship with Horace Walpole began at Eton and lasted until within ten years of Montagu's death, the breach, according to Walpole, being due partly to political differences, and partly to caprice on Montagu's part.—T.

² The "Pitt Diamond" was bought for about £20,000 in India by Thomas Pitt (grandfather of the Earl of Chatham) when Governor of Madras. It was purchased from him in 1717 by the Regent Duc d'Orléans on behalf of Louis XV, for £130,000. The fragments from it when cut were valued at several thousand pounds.—T.

are laying the foundation for their middle age of life, the mimic republic they live in furnishes materials of conversation for their latter age; and old men cannot be said to be children a second time with greater truth for any one cause, than their living over again their childhood in imagination. To reflect on the season when first they felt the titillation of love, the budding passions, and the first dear object of their wishes! how unexperienced they gave credit to all the tales of romantic loves! Dear George, were not the playing fields at Eton food for all manner of flights? No old maid's gown, though it had been tormented into all the fashions from King James to King George, ever underwent so many transformations as those poor plains have in my idea. At first I was contented with tending a visionary flock, and sighing some pastoral name to the echo of the cascade under the bridge. How happy should I have been to have had a kingdom only for the pleasure of being driven from it, and living disguised in an humble vale! As I got further into Virgil and Clelia,³ I found myself transported from Arcadia to the garden of Italy; and saw Windsor Castle in no other view than the *Capitoli immobile saxum*. I wish a committee of the House of Commons may ever seem to be the senate; or a bill appear half so agreeable as a billet-doux. You see how deep you have carried me into old stories; I write of them with pleasure, but shall talk of them with more to you. I can't say I am sorry I was never quite a school-boy: an expedition against bargemen, or a match at cricket, may be very pretty things to recollect; but, thank my stars

³ *Clélie*, the celebrated novel by Madeleine de Seudéry.—T.

stars, I can remember things that ~~are~~ very near as pretty. The beginning of my Roman history was spent in the Asylum, or conversing in Egeria's hallowed grove; not in thumping and pummeling King Amulius's herdsmen. I was sometimes troubled with a rough creature or two from the plough; one, that one should have thought, had worked with his head, as well as his hands, they were both so callous. One of the most agreeable circumstances I can recollect is the Triumvirate, composed of yourself, Charles,⁴ and

Your sincere friend,

HOR. WALPOLE.

2. *To Richard West*¹

[Aetat 21]

Paris

April 21, N. S. 1739

Dear West,—You figure us² in a set of pleasures, which, believe me, we do not find; cards and eating are so universal, that they absorb all variation of pleasures. The operas, indeed, are much frequented three times a week; but to me they would be a greater penance than eating *maigre*: their music resembles a gooseberry tart as much as it does harmony. We have not yet been at the Italian playhouse; scarce any one goes there. Their best amusement, and which, in some parts, beats
ours

⁴ Charles Lyttleton, afterwards Bishop of Carlisle.

¹ Richard West (1716-1742), son of Richard West, Lord Chancellor of Ireland, by Elizabeth, second daughter of Bishop Burnet. He was educated at Eton (where his character and literary tastes gained for him the friendship of Walpole and Gray) and at Christ Church, Oxford. He died June 1, 1742. His death was the subject of Gray's sonnet beginning "In vain to me the smiling mornings shine."—T.

² Walpole was accompanied on the Grand Tour by Gray. They had been intimate at Eton and Cambridge. In 1741 they quarreled at Reggio, but a few years later were reconciled. Walpole ever championed Gray, the poet, and was directly responsible for the publication of much of his work.

ours, is the comedy; three or four of the actors excel any we have: but then to this nobody goes, if it is not one of the fashionable nights; and then they go, be the play good or bad—except on Molière's nights, whose pieces they are quite weary of. Gray and I have been at the *Acare* tonight: I cannot at all commend their performance of it. Last night I was in the Place de Louis le Grand³ (a regular octagon, uniform, and the houses handsome, though not so large as Golden Square) to see what they reckoned one of the finest burials that ever was in France. It was the Duke de Tresmes, governor of Paris and marshal of France. It began on foot from his palace to his parish-church, and from thence in coaches to the opposite end of Paris, to be interred in the church of the Célestins, where is his family-vault. About a week ago we happened to see the grave digging, as we went to see the Church, which is old and small, but fuller of fine ancient monuments than any, except St. Dennis, which we saw on the road, and excels Westminster; for the windows are all painted in mosaic, and the tombs as fresh and well preserved as if they were of yesterday. In the Célestins' church is a votive column to Francis II, which says, that it is one assurance of his being immortalized, to have had the Martyr Mary Stuart for his wife. After this long digression, I return to the burial, which was a most vile thing. A long procession of flambeaux and friars; no plumes, trophies, banners, led horses, scutcheons, or open chariots; nothing but friars, white, black, and grey, with all their trumpery.

This

³ Since 1792 known as the Place des Victoires.—T.

This godly ceremony began at nine at night, and did not finish till three this morning; for, each church they passed, they stopped for a hymn and holy water. By the bye, some of these choice monks, who watched the body while it lay in state, fell asleep one night, and let the tapers catch fire of the rich velvet mantle lined with ermine and powdered with gold flower-de-luces, which melted the lead coffin, and burnt off the feet of the deceased before it wakened them. The French love show; but there is a meanness reigns through it all. At the house where I stood to see this procession, the room was hung with crimson damask and gold, and the windows were mended in ten or a dozen places with paper. At dinner they give you three courses; but a third of the dishes is patched up with salads, butter, puff-paste, or some such miscarriage of a dish. None, but Germans, wear fine clothes; but their coaches are tawdry enough for the wedding of Cupid and Psyche. You would laugh extremely at their signs: some live at the Y grec, some at Venus's toilette, and some at the Sucking Cat. You would not easily guess their notions of honour: I'll tell you one: it is very dishonourable for any gentleman not to be in the army, or in the king's service as they call it, and it is no dishonour to keep public gaming-houses: there are at least a hundred and fifty people of the first quality in Paris who live by it. You may go into their houses at all hours of the night, and find hazard, pharaoh, etc. The men who keep the hazard-table at the Duke de Gesvres' pay him twelve guineas each night for the privilege. Even the princesses of the blood are
dirty

dirty enough to have shares in the banks kept at their houses. We have seen two or three of them; but they are not young, nor remarkable but for wearing their red of a deeper dye than other women, though all use it extravagantly.

The weather is still so bad, that we have not made any excursions to see Versailles and the environs, not even walked in the Tuileries; but we have seen almost everything else that is worth seeing in Paris, though that is very considerable. They beat us vastly in buildings, both in number and magnificence. The tombs of Richelieu and Mazarin at the Sorbonne and the Collège de Quatre Nations¹ are wonderfully fine, especially the former. We have seen very little of the people themselves, who are not inclined to be propitious to strangers, especially if they do not play and speak the language readily. There are many English here: Lord Holderness, Conway,² and Clinton, and Lord George Bentinck; Mr. Brand, Offley, Frederic, Frampton, Bonfoy, etc. Sir John Cotton's son and a Mr. Vernon of Cambridge passed through Paris last week. We shall stay here about a fortnight longer, and then go to Rheims with Mr. Conway for two or three months. When you have nothing else to do, we shall be glad to hear from you; and any news. If we did not remember there was such a place as England, we should know nothing of it: the French never

¹ Now the Palais de l'Institut.—T.

² Hon. Henry Seymour Conway, (1719-1793) brother of the Marquis of Hertford, and first cousin of Horace Walpole, through the marriage of his father to Charlotte Shorter, sister of Lady Walpole. He had an active military career, becoming a Field Marshal in 1793; and for over forty years he sat in Parliament. One hundred and seventy-seven letters to him from Horace Walpole have been published. Conway's political career was largely controlled by Walpole, whose affection for him was great and unbroken.

never mention it, unless it happens to be in one of their proverbs. Adieu!

Yours ever,

H. W.

Tomorrow we go to the *Cid*. They have no farces, but *petites pièces* like our *Devil to Pay*.³

3. To Richard West

[Aetat 21]

From a Hamlet among the Mountains of Savoy

Sept. 28, 1739, N. S.

Precipices, mountains, torrents, wolves, rumblings, Salvator Rosa—the pomp of our park and the meekness of our palace! Here we are, the lonely lords of glorious, desolate prospects. I have kept a sort of resolution which I made, of not writing to you as long as I staid in France; I am now quarter of an hour out of it, and write to you. Mind, 'tis three months since we heard from you. I begin this letter among the clouds; where I shall finish, my neighbour Heaven probably knows: 'tis an odd wish in a mortal letter, to hope not to finish it on this side the atmosphere. You will have a billet tumble to you from the stars when you least think of it; and that I should undergo many transmigrations before I come to 'yours ever.' Yesterday I was a shepherd of Dauphiné; to-day an Alpine savage; to-morrow a Carthusian monk; and Friday a Swiss Calvinist. I have one quality which I find remains with me in all worlds and in all æthers; I brought it with me from your world, and
am

³ An opera by Charles Coffey, produced at Drury Lane in 1731.—T.

am admired for it in this—'tis my esteem for you: this is a common thought among you, and you will laugh at it, but it is new here: as new to remember one's friends in the world one has left, as for you to remember those you have lost.

Aix, in Savoy

Sept. 30th

We are this minute come in here, and there's an awkward abbé this minute come in to us. I asked him if he would sit down. *Oui, oui, oui*. He has ordered us a radish soup for supper, and has brought a chess-board to play with Mr. Conway. I have left 'em in the act, and am set down to write to you. Did you ever see anything like the prospect we saw yesterday? I never did. We rode three leagues to see the Grande Chartreuse; expected bad roads and the finest convent in the kingdom. We were disappointed pro and con. The building is large and plain, and has nothing remarkable but its primitive simplicity; they entertained us in the neatest manner, with eggs, pickled salmon, dried fish, conserves, cheese, butter, grapes, and figs, and pressed us mightily to lie there. We tumbled into the hands of a lay-brother, who, unluckily having the charge of the meal and bran, showed us little besides. They desired us to set down our names in the list of strangers, where, among others we found two mottoes of our countrymen, for whose stupidity and brutality we blushed. The first was of Sir J—— D——, who had wrote down the first stanza of *Justum et tenacem*, altering the last line to *Mente quatit Carthusiana*. The second was of one D——, *Coelum ipsum petimus*

petimus stultitia; et hic ventri indico bellum. The Goth!— But the road, West, the road! winding round a prodigious mountain, and surrounded with others, all shagged with hanging woods, obscured with pines, or lost in clouds! Below, a torrent breaking through cliffs, and tumbling through fragments of rocks! Sheets of cascades forcing their silver speed down channelled precipices, and hasting into the roughened river at the bottom! Now and then an old foot-bridge, with a broken rail, a leaning cross, a cottage, or the ruin of an hermitage! This sounds too bombast and too romantic to one that has not seen it, too cold for one that has. If I could send you my letter post between two lovely tempests that echoed each other's wrath, you might have some idea of this noble roaring scene, as you were reading it. Almost on the summit, upon a fine verdure, but without any prospect, stands the Chartreuse. We staid there two hours, rode back through this charming picture, wished for a painter, wished to be poets! Need I tell you we wished for you? Good night! ¹

4. *To Richard West*

[Aetat 22]

Turin

Nov. 11, 1739. N. S.

So, as the song says, we are in fair Italy! I wonder we are; for on the very highest precipice of Mount Cenis, the devil of discord, in the similitude of sour wine, had got amongst our Alpine savages, and set them a-fighting with Gray and me in
the

¹ The final postscript is omitted.

the chairs: they rushed him by me on a crag, where there was scarce room for a cloven foot. The least slip had tumbled us into such a fog, and such an eternity, as we should never have found our way out of again. We were eight days in coming hither from Lyons; the four last in crossing the Alps. Such uncouth rocks, and such uncomely inhabitants! My dear West, I hope I shall never see them again! At the foot of Mount Cenis we were obliged to quit our chaise, which was taken all to pieces and loaded on mules; and we were carried in low armchairs on poles, swathed in beaver bonnets, beaver gloves, beaver stockings, muffs, and bear-skins. When we came to the top, behold the snows fallen! and such quantities, and conducted by such heavy clouds that hung glouting, that I thought we could never have waded through them. The descent is two leagues, but steep and rough as O——'s father's face, over which, you know, the devil walked with hobnails in his shoes. But the dexterity and nimbleness of the mountaineers are inconceivable: they run with you down steeps and frozen precipices, where no man as men are now, could possibly walk. We had twelve men and nine mules to carry us, our servants, and baggage, and were above five hours in this agreeable jaunt! The day before, I had a cruel accident, and so extraordinary an one, that it seems to touch upon the traveller. I had brought with me a little black spaniel of King Charles's breed; but the prettiest, fattest, dearest little creature! I had left it out of the chaise for the air, and it was waddling along close to the head of the horses, on the top of the highest Alps, by the side of a wood of firs. There darted out a young wolf, seized poor
dear

dear Tory by the throat, and, before we could possibly prevent it, sprung up the side of the rock and carried him off. The postillion jumped off and struck at him with his whip, but in vain. I saw it and screamed, but in vain; for the road was so narrow, that the servants that were behind could not get by the chaise to shoot him. What is the extraordinary part is, that it was but two o'clock, and broad sunshine. It was so shocking to see anything one loved run away with to so horrid a death.

Just coming out of Chamberri, which is a little nasty old hole, I copied an inscription set up at the end of a great road, which was practised through an immense solid rock by bursting it asunder with gunpowder. The Latin is pretty enough, and so I send it you:

Carolus Emanuel II. Sab. dux, Pedem. princeps, Cypri rex, publica felicitate parta, singulorum commodis intentus, breviorum securioremque viam regiam, natura occlusam, Romanis intentatam, caeteris desperatam, dejectis scopulorum repagulis, aequata montium iniquitate, quae cervicibus imminebant precipitia pedibus substernens, aeternis populorum commerciis patefecit. A. D. 1670.

We passed the Pas de Suze, where is a strong fortress on a rock, between two very neighbouring mountains; and then, through a fine avenue of three leagues, we at last discovered Turin:—

■
*E l'un a l'altro mostra, ed in tanto obblia
La noia, e 'l mal della passata via.*

'Tis

'Tis really by far one of the prettiest cities I have seen; not one of your large straggling ones that can afford to have twenty dirty suburbs, but clean and compact, very new and very regular. The king's palace is not of the proudest without, but of the richest within; painted, gilt, looking-glassed, very costly, but very tawdry; in short, a very popular palace. We were last night at the Italian comedy—the devil of a house and the devil of actors! Besides this, there is a sort of an heroic tragedy, called *La rappresentazione dell' Anima Dannata*. A woman, a sinner, comes in and makes a solemn prayer to the Trinity: enter Jesus Christ and the Virgin: he scolds, and exit: she tells the woman her son is very angry, but she don't know, she will see what she can do. After the play we were introduced to the assembly, which they call the *conversazione*; there were many people playing at ombre, pharaoh, and a game called taroc, with cards so high,¹ to the number of seventy-eight. There are three or four English here; Lord Lincoln, with Spence,² your professor of Poetry; a Mr. B—, and a Mr. C—, a man that never utters a syllable. We have tried all stratagems to make him speak. Yesterday he did at last open his mouth, and said *Bec*. We all laughed so at the novelty of the thing that he shut it again, and will never speak more. I think you can't complain now of my not writing to you.

What

¹ Miss Berry remarks in a note that in the MS this word is written in a larger hand than the rest of the letter.—T.

² Rev. Joseph Spence (d. 1768). In 1758 his *Parallel of Magliabecchi and Mr. Hill* was published at Strawberry Hill. He is best known by his *Anecdotes*, published after his death.—T.

What a volume of trifles! I wrote just the fellow to it from Geneva; had it you?

Farewell! Thine,
HOR. WALPOLE.

5. *To Richard West*

[Aetat 22]

Florence

Jan. 24, 1740. N. S.

Dear West,—I don't know what volumes I may send you from Rome; from Florence I have little inclination to send you any. I see several things that please me calmly, but *a force d'en avoir vu* I have left off screaming Lord! this, and Lord! that. To speak sincerely, Calais surprised me more than anything I have seen since. I recollect the joy I used to propose if I could but once see the Great Duke's gallery; I walk into it now with as little emotion as I should into St. Paul's. The statues are a congregation of good sort of people, that I have a great deal of unruffled regard for. The farther I travel the less I wonder at anything: a few days reconcile one to a new spot, or an unseen custom; and men are so much the same everywhere that one scarce perceives any change of situation. The same weaknesses, the same passions, that in England plunge men into elections, drinking, whoring, exist here, and show themselves in the shapes of Jesuits, cicisbeos and Corydon ardebat Alexins. The most remarkable thing I have observed since I came abroad, is, that there are no people so obviously mad as the English. The French, the Italians, have
great

great follies, great faults; but then they are so national, that they cease to be striking. In England, tempers vary so excessively, that almost every one's faults are peculiar to himself. I take this diversity to proceed partly from our climate, partly from our government: the first is changeable, and makes us queer; the latter permits our queernesses to operate as they please. If one could avoid contracting this queerness, it must certainly be the most entertaining to live in England, where such a variety of incidents continually amuse. The incidents of a week in London would furnish all Italy with news for a twelvemonth. The only two circumstances of moment in the life of an Italian, that ever give occasion to their being mentioned, are, being married, and, in a year after, taking a cicisbeo. Ask the name, the husband, the wife, or the cicisbeo of any person, *et voila qui est fini*. Thus, child, 'tis dull dealing here! Methinks your Spanish war is little more lively. By the gravity of the proceedings, one would think both nations were Spaniard. Adieu! Do you remember my maxim, that you used to laugh at? *Everybody does everything, and nothing comes on't*. I am more convinced of it now than ever. I don't know whether S—'s was not still better, *Well, 'gad, there is nothing in nothing*. You see how I distil all my speculations and improvements, that they may lie in a small compass. Do you remember the story of the prince, that, after travelling three years, brought home nothing but a nut? They cracked it: in it was wrapped up a piece of silk, painted with all the kings, queens, kingdoms, and everything in the world: after many unfoldings, out stepped a little dog, shook his ears, and
fell

fell to dancing a saraband. There is a fairy tale for you. If I had anything as good as your old song, I would send it too; but I can only thank you for it, and bid you good night.

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

P. S. Upon reading my letter, I perceive still plainer the sameness that reigns here; for I find I have said the same things ten times over. I don't care; I have made out a letter, and that was all my affair.

6. To Richard West

[Aetat 22]

Florence

February 27, 1740. N. S.

Well West, I have found a little unmasked moment to write to you; but for this week past I have been so muffled up in my domino, that I have not had the command of my elbows. But what have you been doing all the mornings? Could you not write then?—No, then I was masqued too; I have done nothing but slip out of my domino into bed, and out of bed into my domino. The end of the Carnival is frantic, bacchanalian; all the morn one makes parties in masque to the shops and coffee-houses, and all the evening to the operas and balls. *Then I have danced, good gods! how have I danced!* The Italians are fond to a degree of our country dances: *Cold and raw* they only know by the tune; *Blowzybella* is almost Italian, and *Buttered peas* is *Pizelli al buro*. There are but three days more; but the two last are to have balls all the morning at the
fine

fine unfinished palace of the Strozzi; and the Tuesday night a masquerade after supper; they sup first, to eat *gras*, and not encroach upon Ash-Wednesday. What makes masquerading more agreeable here than in England, is the great deference that is showed to the disguised. Here they do not catch at those little dirty opportunities of saying any ill-natured thing they know of you, do not abuse you because they may, or talk gross bawdy to a woman of quality. I found the other day, by a play of Etheridge's, that we have had a sort of Carnival ever since the Reformation; 'tis in *She would if She could*, they talk of going a-mumming in Shrove-tide.

After talking so much of diversions, I fear you will attribute to them the fondness I own I contract for Florence; but it has so many other charms, that I shall not want excuses for my taste. The freedom of the Carnival has given me opportunities to make several acquaintances; and if I have not found them refined, learned, polished, like some other cities, yet they are civil, good-natured, and fond of the English. Their little partiality for themselves, opposed to the violent vanity of the French, makes them very amiable in my eyes. I can give you a comical instance of their great prejudice about nobility; it happened yesterday. While we were at dinner at Mr. Mann's,¹

word

¹ Minister at the Court of Tuscany, 1740-1786; cr. a Baronet, 1755; K.B., 1768; d. unmarried at Florence, aged eighty-five, Nov. 1786, having never revisited England since taking up his appointment, although in 1775 on the death of his brother Edward Louisa Mann he succeeded to the estate of Linton, in Kent. The Walpole and Mann families were connected, and this probably accounts, in the first instance, for Horace Walpole's residence in Florence with Mann, whose inmate he was at different times during his stay in Italy in 1739 and 1741. Walpole and Mann became intimate friends, and when the former returned to England they began a correspondence which continued uninterrupted for forty-five years (during which period they never met) until Mann's death.—T.

word was brought by his secretary, that a cavalier demanded audience of him upon an affair of honour. Gray and I flew behind the curtain of the door. An elderly gentleman, whose attire was not certainly correspondent to the greatness of his birth, entered, and informed the British minister, that one Martin, an English painter, had left a challenge for him at his house, for having said Martin was no gentleman. He would by no means have spoke of the duel before the transaction of it, but that his honour, his blood, his etc. would never permit him to fight with one who was no cavalier; which was what he came to inquire of his excellency. We laughed loud laughs, but unheard: his fright or his nobility had closed his ears. But mark the sequel: the instant he was gone, my very English curiosity hurried me out of the gate St. Gallo: 'twas the place and hour appointed. We had not been driving about above ten minutes, but out popped a little figure, pale but cross, with beard unshaved and hair uncombed, a slouched hat, and a considerable red cloak, in which was wrapped, under his arm, the fatal sword that was to revenge the highly injured Mr. Martin, painter and defendant. I darted my head out of the coach, just ready to say, 'Your servant, Mr. Martin,' and talk about the architecture of the triumphal arch that was building there; but he would not know me, and walked off. We left him to wait for an hour, to grow very cold and very valiant the more it grew past the hour of appointment. We were figuring all the poor creature's huddle of thoughts, and confused hopes of victory or fame, of his unfinished pictures, or his situation upon bouncing into the next world. You will think us strange creatures

creatures; but 'twas a pleasant sight, as we knew the poor painter was safe. I have thought of it since, and am inclined to believe that nothing but two English could have been capable of such a jaunt. I remember, 'twas reported in London, that the plague was at a house in the city, and all the town went to see it.

I have this instant received your letter. Lord! I am glad I thought of those parallel passages, since it made you translate them. 'Tis excessively near the original; and yet, I don't know, 'tis very easy too. . . . It snows here a little to-night, but it never lies but on the mountains. Adieu!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

P. S. What is the history of the theatres this winter?

7. *To Horace Mann*¹

[*Ætæ 23*]

Calais, and Friday, and here I have
been these two day, 1741

Is the wind laid? Shall I never get aboard? I came here on Wednesday night, but found a tempest that has never
ceased

¹ The *Advertisement* prefixed by Horace Walpole to his letters to Sir Horace Mann runs thus:—

'The following collection of letters, written very carelessly by a young man, had been preserved by the person to whom they were addressed. The Author, some years after the date of the first, borrowed them, on account of some anecdotes interspersed. On the perusal, among many trifling relations and stories, which were only of consequence or amusing to the two persons concerned in the correspondence, he found some facts, characters, and news, which though below the dignity of History, might prove entertaining to many other people: and knowing how much pleasure, not only himself, but many other persons have often found in a series of private and familiar Letters, he thought it worth his while to preserve these, as they contain something of the customs, fashions, politics, diversions, and private history of several years; which, if worthy of any existence, can be properly transmitted to posterity only in this manner.

'The reader will find a few pieces of intelligence which did not prove true; but which

ceased since. At Boulogne I left Lord Shrewsbury and his mother, and brothers and sisters, waiting too: Bulstrode passes his winter at the court of Boulogne, and then is to travel with two young Shrewsburys. I was overtaken by Amorevoli and Monticelli,² who are here with me and the Viscontina,² and Barberina,² and Abbate Vanneschi³—what a coxcomb! I would have talked to him about the Opera, but he preferred politics. I have wearied Amorevoli with questions about you. If he was not just come from you, and could talk to me about you, I should hate him; for, to flatter me, he told me that I talked Italian better than you. He did not know how little I think it a compliment to have anything preferred to you—besides, you know the consistence of my Italian! They are all frightened out of their senses about going on the sea, and are not a little afraid of the English. They went aboard the *William and Mary* yacht yesterday, which waits here for Lady Cardigan from Spa. The captain clapped the door, and swore in broad English that the Viscontina should not stir till she gave

are retained here as the Author heard and related them, lest correction should spoil the simple air of the narrative. When the Letters were written, they were never intended for public inspection; and now they are far from being thought correct, or more authentic than the general turn of epistolary correspondence admits. The Author would sooner have burnt them, than have taken the trouble to correct such errant trifles which are here presented to the reader, with scarce any variation or omissions, but what private friendships and private history, or the great haste with which the letters were written, made indispensably necessary, as will plainly appear, not only by the unavoidable chasms, where the originals were worn out or torn away, but by many idle relations and injudicious remarks and prejudices of a young man; for which the only excuse the Author can pretend to make, is, that as some future reader may possibly be as young as he was when he first wrote, he hopes they may be amused with what graver people (if into such hands they should fall) will very justly despise. Whoever has patience to peruse the series, will find, perhaps, that as the Author grew older some of his faults grew less striking.—T.

² Singers and dancers.

³ An Italian abbé who directed and wrote the operas under the protection of Lord Middlesex.—WALPOLE.

gave him a song, he did not care whether it was a catch or a moving ballad; but she would not submit. I wonder he did! When she came home and told me, I begged her not to judge of all the English from this specimen; but, by the way, she will find many sea-captains that grow on dry land.

Sittinburn

Sept. 13. O. S.

Saturday morning, or yesterday, we did set out, and after a good passage of four hours and a half, landed at Dover. I begin to count my comforts, for I find their contraries thicken on my apprehension. I have, at least, done for awhile with post chaises. My trunks were a little opened at Calais, and they would have stopped my medals, but with much ado and much three louis's they let them pass. At Dover I found the benefit of the *motions*¹ having miscarried last year, for they respected Sir Robert's son even in the person of his trunks. I came over in a yacht with East India captains' widows, a Catholic girl coming from a convent to be married, with an Irish priest to guard her, who says he studied *medicines* for two years, and after that *he studied learning* for two years more. I have not brought over a word of French or Italian for common use; I have so taken pains to avoid affectation in this point, that I have failed only now and then in a *chi è lui* to the servants, who I can scarce persuade myself yet are
English

¹ The motion in both Houses of Parliament, 1740. for removing Sir Robert Walpole from the King's councils.—WALPOLE.

English. The country-town (and you will believe me, who, you know, am not prejudiced) delights me: the populousness, the ease, the gaiety, and well-dressed everybody amaze me. Canterbury, which on my setting out I thought deplorable, is a paradise to Modena, Reggio, Parma, etc. I had before discovered that there was nowhere but in England the distinction of *middling people*; I perceive now, that there is peculiar to us *middling houses*: how snug they are! I write to-night because I have time; to-morrow I get to London just as the post goes. Sir R. is at Houghton. . . .²

Good night till another post. You are quite well, I trust, but tell me so always. My loves to the Chutes³ and all the etc's.

Oh! a story of Mr. Pope and the Prince⁴:— 'Mr. Pope, you don't love princes.' 'Sir, I beg your pardon.' 'Well, you don't love kings then!' 'Sir, I own I love the lion best before his claws are grown.' Was it possible to make a better answer to such simple questions?

Adieu! my dearest child!

Yours, ten thousand times over.

P. S. Patapan⁵ does not seem to regret his own country.

My

² Passage omitted.—T.

³ John Chute and Francis Whithed Esqrs., two great friends of Mr. W.'s, whom he had left at Florence, where he had been himself thirteen months in the house of Mr. Mann, his relation and particular friend.—WALPOLE. . . . John Chute (1701-1776) became acquainted with Walpole at Florence in 1740, and they continued, until Chute's death, on terms of the most intimate friendship. He was Walpole's occasional correspondent, and was a frequent guest at Strawberry Hill, where his antiquarian tastes made him particularly welcome.—T.

⁴ Frederick, Prince of Wales.—T.

⁵ Mr. W.'s dog.—WALPOLE.

8. *To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway*[*Ætæt 24*]

London

October 31, 1741

My dearest Harry,—You have made me infinitely happy, but infinitely impatient for Monday se'nnight. I have wished for you more particularly this week, and wanted you all at Sir Thomas Robinson's and the birthday. You have already had accounts, I suppose, of the former from Lady Caroline¹ and Mr. Selwyn,² but I will say my bit about it too; I told Lady Caroline I would; besides, I made a list of most of the people, and will tell you some of the company, which was all extremely good; there were none but people of the first fashion, except Mr. Kent,³ Mr. Cibber,⁴ Mr. Swiny, and the Parsons family, and you know all these have an alloy. Kent came as governess to Lady Charlotte Boyle, Cibber and Swiny have long had their freedom given them of this end of the town, and the Parsons's took out theirs at Paris. There were an hundred and ninety-seven people, yet no confusion; he had taken off all the doors of his house, and, in short, distributed everybody quite to their well-being. The dancers were the
two

¹ Lady Caroline Fitzroy (d. 1784), eldest daughter of second Duke of Grafton; m. (1746) William Stanhope, Viscount Petersham, who succeeded his father as second Earl of Harrington in 1756.—T.

² George Augustus Selwyn (1719-1791), the wit. He sat for many years in Parliament and held various sinecures. Walpole and he met at Eton, and although Selwyn was only an occasional correspondent, they maintained an unbroken intimacy throughout their lives.

³ William Kent, the architect.—T.

⁴ Colley Cibber (1671-1757), actor and dramatist.—T.

⁵ Lady Georgiana Caroline Lennox (d. 1774), eldest daughter of second Duke of Richmond; cr. Baroness Holland, of Holland, Lincolnshire, 1762; m. (1744) Henry Fox (afterwards Lord Holland), by whom she was the mother of the second Lord Holland and of Charles James Fox.

two Lady Lenox's⁵ (Lady Emily, queen of the ball, and appeared in great majesty from behind a vast bouquet), Lady Lucy Manners, Lady Ancram, Lady Lucy Clinton, Ladies Harriot and Anne Wentworth, Sophia and Charlotte Fermor,⁶ and Camilla Bennet; Miss Pelham⁷ (Lord! how ugly she is!); Misses Walpole,⁸ Leneve, Churchill, Parsons, Maccartny, Pultney, Mary Townshend, Newton, and Brown. The men, Lord John Sackville, Lord Ancram, Holderness, Ashburnham, Howard, Hartington and Castlehaven; Mr. Colebrook, Poulett, Churchill,⁹ two Townshends, Parsons, Vernon, Carteret, Colonel Maguire, and a Sir William Boothby. For the rest of the company you shall see the list when you come to town. Lord and Lady Euston and Lady Caroline did not dance. A supper for the lady dancers was served at twelve, their partners and waiting tables with other supper stood behind. Oh! I danced country dances, I had forgot myself. The ball ended at four.

Now for the birthday. There were loads of men, not many ladies, nor much finery. Lord Fitzwilliams and myself were the only two very fine; I was in a great taking about my clothes, they

⁵ Lady Sophia Fermor, eldest daughter of first Earl of Pomfret; m. (1744) as his second wife, the well-known Minister, Lord Carteret (afterwards Earl Granville); d. 1745.—T.

Lady Charlotte Fermor (d. 1813), second daughter of first Earl of Pomfret; m. (1746) as his second wife, Hon. William Finch. She was governess to the children of George III.—T.

Rumor had it that Walpole was in love with one or both of the sisters. *A Chronicle of the Fermors: Horace Walpole in Love*, by M. F. Mahony, was published (two volumes) in London, 1873.

⁷ Catherine, eldest daughter of the Prime Minister—T.

⁸ One of these was Mary, natural daughter of Sir Robert Walpole by Maria Skerrett (whom he married in 1738). On her father's promotion to the peerage, George II granted her the rank of an earl's daughter. She married (1746) Charles, natural son of General Charles Churchill, by Mrs. Oldfield, the actress, by whom he had a large family.—T.

⁹ See preceding note.

they came from Paris, and did not arrive till nine o'clock of the birthday morning. I was obliged to send one of the King's messengers for them and Lord Holderness's suit to Dover. There were nineteen suits came with them. Do you know I was in such a fright lest they should get into the news, and took up the *Craftsman*¹ with fear and trembling. There was the greatest crowd at the ball I ever saw. Lady Euston danced country dances with the Duke.² My aunt Horace had adapted her gown to her complexion, and chose a silk all broke out in pink blotches. By the way, was ever anything so terrible as Lord Holderness's face? Poor Lady Ancram's will be as bad in a twelvemonth. She, the Duke of Kingston, Lord Middlesex, and Lady Albermarle, are dreadfully altered. You can't think what an alteration towards old I find among my acquaintance.

Harry, you must come and be in love with Lady Sophia Fermor; all the world is or should be. But I had cried her up so much before she appeared that she does not answer everybody's expectation. No more will the Opera to-night, for Amorevoli is ill and does not sing; his part is to be read. They had certainly much better have staid till Tuesday; but for fear of disappointing people, I fear they will disappoint them. I am not to be there, for Dodd has got a fever with the heat of the ball last night, so I shall not leave him. Indeed, my dear Harry, I will not scold you about the Opera, but I should have been glad, I own, that you were not in the direction

¹ The organ of the Opposition.—T.

² The Duke of Cumberland.—T.

direction. I doubt much of the success; and even should it succeed, gentlemen—and they very young gentlemen—are mighty apt not to understand economy and management. Do get out of it, if possible.

Good night! I have nothing more to tell you now, but I shall have a quantity to say to you. My loves to all your family.

Yours ever,

H. W.

9. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway

[Aetat 24]

London

1741

My dearest Harry,—Before I thank you for myself, I must thank you for that excessive good nature you showed in writing to poor Gray.¹ I am less impatient to see you, as I find you are not the least altered, but have the same tender friendly temper you always had. I wanted much to see if you were still the same—but you are.

Don't think of coming before your brother; he is too good to be left for any one living: besides, if it is possible, I will see you in the country. Don't reproach me, and think nothing could draw me into the country: impatience to see a few friends has drawn me out of Italy; and Italy, Harry, is pleasanter than London. As I do not love living *en famille* so much as you (but then indeed my family is not like yours) I am hurried
about

¹ Gray's father died on Nov. 6, 1741.—T.

about getting myself a house; for I have so long lived single, that I do not much take to being confined with my own family.

You won't find me much altered, I believe; at least outwardly. I am not grown a bit shorter, or a bit fatter, but am just the same long lean creature as usual. Then I talk no French, but to my footman; nor Italian, but to myself. What inward alterations may have happened to me, you will discover best; for you know 'tis said, one never knows that one's self. I will answer, that that part of it that belongs to you, has not suffered the least change—I took care of that.

For virtù, I have a little to entertain you: it is my sole pleasure—I am neither young enough nor old enough to be in love.

My dear Harry, will you take care and make my compliments to that charming Lady Conway, who I hear is so charming, and to Miss Jenny, who I know is so? As for Miss Anne, and her love *as far as it is decent*: tell her, decency is out of the question between us, that I love her without any restriction. I settled it yesterday with Miss Conway, that you three are brothers and sister to me, and that if you had been so, I could not love you better. I have so many cousins, and uncles and aunts, and bloods that grow in Norfolk, that if I had portioned out my affections to them, as they say I should, what a modicum would have fallen to each!—So, to avoid fractions, I love my family in you three, their representatives. Adieu, my dear Harry! Direct to me at Downing Street. Good-bye!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

10. *To Horace Mann*

[*Ætæt 24*]

Chelsea

July 29, 1742

I am quite out of humour; the whole town is melted away; you never saw such a desert. You know what Florence is in the vintage-season, at least I remember what it was: London is just as empty, nothing but half a dozen private gentlewomen left, who live upon the scandal that they laid up in the winter. I am going too! this day se'nnight we set out for Houghton, for three months; but I scarce think that I shall allow thirty days a-piece to them. Next post I shall not be able to write to you; and when I am there, shall scarce find materials to furnish a letter above every other post. I beg, however, that you will write constantly to me; it will be my only entertainment, for I neither hunt, brew, drink, nor reap. When I return in the winter, I will make amends for this barren season of our correspondence.

I carried Sir Robert the other night to Ranelagh for the first time: my uncle's prudence, or fear, would never let him go before. It was pretty full, and all its fullness flocked round us: we walked with a train at our heels, like two chairmen going to fight; but they were extremely civil, and did not crowd him, or say the least impertinence—I think he grows popular already! The other day he got it asked, whether he should be received if he went to Carelton House?—no, truly!—but yesterday morning Lord Baltimore came to soften it

a little; that his Royal Highness did not refuse to see him, but that now the Court was out of town, and he had no Drawing-room, he did not see anybody.

They have given Mrs. Pulteney an admirable name, and one that is likely to stick by her—instead of Lady Bath, they call her the wife of Bath. Don't you figure her squabbling at the gate with St. Peter for a halfpenny?

Cibber has published a little pamphlet¹ against Pope, which has a great deal of spirit, and, from some circumstances, will notably vex him. I will send it to you by the first opportunity, with a new pamphlet, said to be Dodington's, called *A Comparison of the Old and New Ministry*: it is much liked. I have not forgot your magazines, but will send them and these pamphlets together. Adieu! I am at the end of my tell. P. S. Lord Edgcumbe is just made Lord-Lieutenant of Cornwall, at which the Lord of Bath looks sour. He said, yesterday, that the King would give orders for several other considerable alterations; but he gave no orders, except for this, which was not asked by that earl.

II. To John Chute

[Ætæt 25]

Houghton

August 20, 1743

Indeed, my dear sir, you certainly did not use to be stupid, and till you give me more substantial proof that you are so,
I

¹ A letter from Mr. Cibber to Mr. Pope. In consequence of this letter Pope substituted Cibber for Theobald as hero of the fourth book of the *Dunciad*, published in October, 1742.—T.

I shall not believe it. As for your temperate diet and milk bringing about such a metamorphosis, I hold it impossible. I have such lamentable proofs every day before my eyes of the stupefying qualities of beef, ale, and wine, that I have contracted a most religious veneration for your spiritual nouriture. Only imagine that I here every day see men, who are mountains of roast beef, and only seem just roughly hewn out into the outlines of human form, like the giant-rock at Pratolino. I shudder when I see them brandish their knives in act to carve, and look on them as savages that devour one another. I should not stare at all more than I do, if yonder Alderman at the lower end of the table was to stick his fork into his neighbour's jolly cheek, and cut a brave slice of brown and fat. Why, I'll swear I see no difference between a country gentleman and a sirloin; whenever the first laughs, or the latter is cut, there run out just the same streams of gravy! Indeed, the sirloin does not ask quite so many questions. I have an Aunt here, a family piece of goods, an old remnant of inquisitive hospitality and economy, who, to all intents and purposes, is as beefy as her neighbours. She wore me so down yesterday with interrogatories, that I dreamt all night she was at my ear with 'who's' and 'why's,' and 'when's,' and 'where's,' till at last in my very sleep I cried out, 'For God in heaven's sake, Madam, ask me no more questions!'

Oh! my dear Sir, don't you find that nine parts in ten of the world are of no use but to make you wish yourself with that tenth part? I am so far from growing used to mankind by living amongst them, that my natural ferocity and wildness
does

does but every day grow worse. They tire me, they fatigue me; I don't know what to do with them; I don't know what to say to them; I fling open the windows, and fancy I want air; and when I get by myself, I undress myself, and seem to have had people in my pockets, in my plaits, and on my shoulders! I indeed find this fatigue worse in the country than in town, because one can avoid it there and has more resources; but it is there too. I fear 'tis growing old; but I literally seem to have murdered a man whose name was Ennui, for his ghost is ever before me. They say there is no English word for *ennui*; I think you may translate it most literally by what is called 'entertaining people,' and 'doing the honours': that is, you sit an hour with somebody you don't know and don't care for, talk about the wind and the weather, and ask a thousand foolish questions, which all begin with, 'I think you live a good deal in the country,' or, 'I think you don't love this thing or that.' Oh! 'tis dreadful!

I'll tell you what is delightful—the Dominichin! My dear Sir, if ever there was a Dominichin, if there was ever an original picture, this is one. I am quite happy; for my father is as much transported with it as I am. It is hung in the gallery, where are all his most capital pictures, and he himself thinks it beats all but the two Guidos. That of the Doctors and the Octagon—I don't know if you ever saw them? What a chain of thought this leads me into! but why should I not indulge it? I will flatter myself with your, some time or other, passing a few days here with me. Why must I never expect to see anything but Beefs in a gallery which would not
yield

yield even to the Colonna! If I do not most unlimitedly wish to see you and Mr. Whithed in it this very moment, it is only because I would not take you from our dear *Miny*. Adieu! you charming people all. Is not Madam Bosville a Beef?

Yours most sincerely.

12. To Horace Mann

[Aetat 25]

Newmarket

Oct. 3, 1743

I am writing to you in an inn on the road to London. What a paradise should I have thought this when I was in the Italian inns! in a wide barn with four ample windows, which had nothing more like glass than shutters and iron bars! no tester to the bed, and the saddles and portmanteaus heaped on me to keep off the cold. What a paradise did I think the inn at Dover when I came back! and what magnificence were twopenny prints, saltcellars, and boxes to hold the knives; but the *summum bonum* was small-beer and the newspaper.

‘I bless’d my stars, and call’d it luxury!’

Who was the Neapolitan ambassadress that could not live at Paris, because there was no macaroni? Now am I relapsed into all the dissatisfied repinement of a true English grumbling voluptuary. I could find in my heart to write a *Craftsman* against the Government, because I am not quite so much at my ease as on my own sofa. I could persuade myself that it is
my

my Lord Carteret's fault that I am only sitting in a common arm-chair, when I would be lolling in a *péché-mortel*. How dismal, how solitary, how scrub does this town look; and yet it has actually a street of houses better than Parma or Modena. Nay, the houses of the people of fashion, who come hither for the races, are palaces to what houses in London itself were fifteen years ago. People do begin to live again now, and I suppose in a term we shall revert to York Houses, Clarendon Houses, etc. But from that grandeur all the nobility had contracted themselves to live in coops of a dining-room, a dark back-room, with one eye in a corner, and a closet. Think what London would be, if the chief houses were in it, as in the cities in other countries, and not dispersed like great rarity-plums in a vast pudding of country. Well, it is a tolerable place as it is! Were I a physician, I would prescribe nothing but *recipe cccxxv drachm. Londin*. Would you know why I like London so much? Why, if the world must consist of so many fools as it does, I choose to take them in the gross, and not made into separate pills, as they are prepared in the country. Besides, there is no being alone but in a metropolis: the worst place in the world to find solitude is the country: questions grow there, and that unpleasant Christian commodity, neighbours. Oh! they are all good Samaritans, and do so pour balms and nostrums upon one, if one has but the toothache, or a journey to take, that they break one's head. A journey to take—ay! they talk over the miles to you, and tell you, you will be late in. My Lord Lovel says, *John* always goes two hours in the dark in the morning, to avoid being one hour in the dark in
the

the evening. I was pressed to ~~set~~ out to-day before seven; I did before nine; and here am I arrived at a quarter past five, for the rest of the night.

I am more convinced every day, that there is not only no knowledge of the world out of a great city, but no decency, no practicable society—I had almost said, not a virtue. I will only instance in modesty, which all *old Englishmen* are persuaded cannot exist within the atmosphere of Middlesex. Lady Mary has a remarkable taste and knowledge of music, and can sing; I don't say, like your sister, but I am sure she would be ready to die if obliged to sing before three people, or before one with whom she is not intimate. The other day there came to see her a Norfolk heiress; the young gentlewoman had not been three hours in the house, and that for the first time of her life, before she notified her talent for singing, and invited herself upstairs, to Lady Mary's harpsichord; where, with a voice like thunder, and with as little harmony, she sang to nine or ten people for an hour. 'Was ever nymph like Rossymonde?'—no, *d'honneur*. We told her she had a very strong voice. 'Lord, Sir! my master says it is nothing to what it was.' My dear child, she brags abominably; if it had been a thousandth degree louder, you must have heard it to Florence.

I did not write to you last post, being overwhelmed with this sort of people: I will be more punctual in London. Patapan is in my lap; I had him wormed lately, which he took heinously; I made it up with him by tying a collar of rainbow riband about his neck, for a token that he is never to be wormed any

more; which he received as implicitly as good folks do the assurances of their never being drowned in a collective body, though all their doctors do not scruple to let them know they are to be burnt.

I had your long letter of two sheets of Sept. 17th, and wonder at your perseverance in telling me so much as you always do, when I, dull creature, find so little for you. I can only tell you that the more you write, the happier you make me; and I assure you, the more details the better: I so often lay schemes for returning to you, that I am persuaded I shall, and would keep up my stock of Florentine ideas.

I honour Matthews's punctilious observance of his *Holiness's* dignity. How incomprehensible Englishmen are! I should have sworn that he would have piqued himself on calling the Pope the w—— of Babylon, and have begun his remonstrance with 'you old damned bitch'. What extremes of absurdities! to flounder from Pope Joan to his Holiness! I like your reflection, 'that everybody can bully the Pope.' There was a humourist called Sir James of the Peak,¹ who had been beat by a fellow, who afterwards underwent the same operation from a third hand. 'Zounds,' said Sir James, 'that I did not know this fellow would take a beating!' Nay, my dear child, I don't know that Matthews would!

You know I always thought the *Tesi comique, pendant que ça devoit être tragique*. I am happy that my sovereign Lady expressed my opinion so well—by the way, is De Sade still
with

¹ A noted gamester, frequently mentioned in correspondence of the early part of the eighteenth century.—T.

with you? Is he still in pawn by the proxy of his clothes? Has the Princess as constant retirements to her bedchamber with the *colique*—and Antenori! Oh! I was struck the other day with a resemblance of mine hostess at Brandon to old Sarazin. You must know, the ladies of Norfolk universally wear periwigs, and affirm that it is the fashion at London. ‘Lord, Mrs. White, have you been ill, that you have shaved your head?’ Mrs. White, in all the days of my acquaintance with her, had a professed head of red hair: to-day, she had no hair at all before, and at a distance above her ears, I descried a smart brown bob, from beneath which had escaped some long strings of original scarlet—so like old Sarazin at two in the morning, when she has been losing at pharaoh, and clawed her wig aside, and her old trunk is shaded with the venerable white ivy of her own locks.²

13. *To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway*

[Aetat 26]

Arlington Street

July 20, 1744

My Dearest Harry,—I feel that I have so much to say to you, that I foresee there will be but little method in my letter; but if, upon the whole, you see my meaning, and the depth of my friendship for you, I am content.

It was most agreeable to me to receive a letter of confidence from you, at the time I expected a very different one from you; though, by the date of your last, I perceive you had not then

² The rest of this letter is omitted.

then received some letters, which, though I did not see, I must call simple, as they could only tend to make you uneasy for some months. I should not have thought of communicating a quarrel to you at this distance, and I don't conceive the sort of friendship of those that thought it necessary. When I heard it had been wrote to you, I thought it right to myself to give you my account of it, but, by your brother's desire, suppressed my letter, and left it to be explained by him, who wrote to you so sensibly on it, that I shall say no more but that I think myself so ill-used that it will prevent my giving you thoroughly the advice you ask of me; for how can I be sure that my resentment might not make me see in a stronger light the reasons for your breaking off an affair which you know before I never approved?¹

You know my temper is so open to anybody I love that I must be happy at seeing you lay aside a reserve with me, which is the only point that ever made me dissatisfied with you. That silence of yours has, perhaps, been one of the chief reasons that has always prevented my saying much to you on a topic which I saw was so near your heart. Indeed, its being so near was another reason; for how could I expect you would take my advice, even if you bore it? But, my dearest Harry, how can I advise you now? Is it not gone too far for me to expect you should keep any resolution about it, especially in absence,
which

¹ This was an early attachment of Mr. Conway's. By his having complied with the wishes and advice of his friend on this subject, and got the better of his passion, he probably felt that he, in some measure, owed to Mr. Walpole the subsequent happiness of his life, in his marriage to another person.—BERRY. Conway was attached to Lady Caroline Fitzroy, daughter of the Duke of Grafton. She married Viscount Petersham, afterwards Earl of Harrington.

which must be destroyed the moment you meet again? And if ever you should marry and be happy, won't you reproach me with having tried to hinder it? I think you as just and honest as I think any man living; but any man living in that circumstance would think I had been prompted by private reasons. I see as strongly as you can all the arguments for your breaking off; but, indeed, the alteration of your fortune adds very little strength to what they had before. You never had fortune enough to make such a step at all prudent: she loved you enough to be content with that; I can't believe this change will alter her sentiments, for I must do her the justice to say that it is plain she preferred you with nothing to all the world. I could talk upon this head, but I will only leave you to consider, without advising you on either side, these two things—whether you think it honester to break off with her after such engagements as yours (how strong I don't know) after her refusing very good matches for you, and show her that she must think of making her fortune; or whether you will wait with her till some amendment in your fortune can put it in your power to marry her.

My dearest Harry,—You must see why I don't care to say more on this head. My wishing it could be right for you to break off with her (for, without it is right, I would not have you on any account take such a step) makes it impossible for me to advise it; and, therefore, I am sure you will forgive my declining an act of friendship which your having put in my power gives me the greatest satisfaction. But it does put something else in my power, which I am sure nothing can make me decline

decline, and for which I have long wanted an opportunity. Nothing could prevent my being unhappy at the smallness of your fortune, but its throwing it into my way to offer you to share mine. As mine is so precarious, by depending on so bad a constitution, I can only offer you the immediate use of it. I do that most sincerely. My places still (though my Lord Walpole has cut off three hundred pounds a year to save himself the trouble of signing his name ten times for once) bring me in near two thousand pounds a year. I have no debts, no connections; indeed no way to dispose of it particularly. By living with my father, I have little real use for a quarter of it. I have always flung it away all in the most idle manner; but, my dear Harry, idle as I am, and thoughtless, I have sense enough to have a real pleasure in denying myself baubles, and in saving a good income to make a man happy, for whom I have a just esteem and most sincere friendship. I know the difficulties any gentleman and man of spirit must struggle with, even in having such an offer made him, much more in accepting it. I hope you will allow there are some in making it. But hear me: if there is any such thing as friendship in the world, these are the opportunities of exerting it, and it can't be exerted without it is accepted. I must talk of myself to prove to you that it will be right for you to accept it. I am sensible of having more follies and weaknesses, and fewer real good qualities, than most men. I sometimes reflect on this, though I own too seldom. I always want to begin acting like a man, and a sensible one, which I think I might be if I would. Can I begin better than by taking care of my fortune

for

'for one I love? You have seen (I have seen you have) that I am fickle, and foolishly fond of twenty new people; but I don't really love them—I have always loved you constantly: I am willing to convince you and the world, what I have always told you, that I loved you better than anybody. If I ever felt much for anything (which I know may be questioned) it was certainly for my mother. I look on you as my nearest relation by her,¹ and I think I can never do enough to show my gratitude and affection to her. For these reasons, don't deny me what I have set my heart on—the making your fortune easy to you. . . .

(The rest of this letter is wanting.)

14. To Henry Fox

[Aetat 28]

Mistley

July 24, 1746

Dear Sir,—You frighten me out of my wits, which is indeed a fair step towards making me in earnest a poet, a title I should dread more than that of a Patriot, and which I should certainly get into no wills by.² I will be so honest as to own that the obliging things you say to me please me vastly. I find I have enough of the author in me to be extremely sensible to flattery, and were I far enough gone to publish a miscellany, there would certainly be one copy to *my honoured friend Henry Fox on his commending my verses*. But seriously, my dear Sir,
you

¹ Lady Walpole and Lady Conway were sisters.—T.

² The old Duchess of Marlborough left 10,000*l.* to William Pitt (a prominent member of the 'Patriot' opposition) in recognition of his 'noble defence of the laws of England.'—T.

you alarm me, with talking of making those I sent you public. I never thought poetry excusable but in the manner I sent you mine, just to divert anybody one loves for half an hour—and I know I must love anybody, to put myself so much in their power for their diversion. But to make anything one writes, especially poetry, public, is giving everybody leave under one's own hand to call one fool. You think me modest, but all my modesty is pride; while I am unknown, I am as great as my own imagination pleases to make me; the instant I get into that dreadful Court of Requests you talk of, I am as silly a fellow as Thomson or Glover—you even reduce me to plead that foolish excuse against being published, which authors make to excuse themselves when they have published—that their compositions were made in a hurry or extempore. Rigby will assure you that what I sent you was literally wrote in less than three hours; and, my dear Harry, I am not vain enough to think that I can write in three hours what would deserve to live three days. I will give you two more very material reasons for your suppressing my verses, and have done: one is, I don't care to make all the women in England my enemies, but sixteen, as their resentments would probably hurt me more than the gratitude of my goddesses would do me good, with all their charms; and the other reason is, that the conclusion of the poem is more particular than I would choose publicly to subscribe to.

I am content with your approbation and Lady Caroline's: pray tell her the reason I said so little of Lady Emily in detail was what the critics, a set of gentlemen she is happily not acquainted

acquainted with, say in excuse for ~~the~~ heroes of the epic poems, who are very little talked of in comparison with their rivals, but who are supposed to be celebrated enough, by surpassing those who are more amply commended; or you may tell her what will be more familiar to her than Homer and Virgil, that if I had said Mrs. Bethel was the ugliest woman in the world, I should not have specified her nose, her mouth, or her complexion. For the last line on Lady Emily, which you don't understand, it only means that it is a pity she is not as like Venus in being a mother, as she is in the rest of her merits.

I beg your pardon for troubling you with a second letter so long, when I shall be in town the day after it, but I was so anxious about your talking of making my verses public, that I could not refrain a moment from begging you not. Rigby has left his kindest love for you: he is gone to a cricket-match, from which your letter has saved me. You have commended me so much, he begins to look on me in a higher light, and even deigns to treat my leisure as sacred.

I am, my dear Sir, and always shall be, if you will suppress my verses

Your most obliged humble servant,

HORACE WALPOLE

15. To Horace Mann

[*Aetat 28*]

Windsor

Aug. 21, 1746

You will perceive by my date that I am got into a new scene, and that I am retired hither like an old summer dowager; only
that

that I have no toad-eater to take the air with me in the back part of my lozenge-coach,¹ and to be scolded. I have taken a small house here within the castle, and propose spending the greatest part of every week here till the Parliament meets; but my jaunts to town will prevent my news from being quite provincial and marvelous. Then I promise you, I will go to no races nor assemblies, nor make comments upon couples that come in chaises to the White Hart.

I came from town (for take notice, I put this place upon myself for the country) the day after the execution of the rebel lords: I was not at it, but had two persons come to me directly who were at the next house to the scaffold: and I saw another who was upon it, so that you may depend upon my accounts.

Just before they came out of the Tower, Lord Balmerino drank a bumper to King James's health. As the clock struck ten, they came forth on foot, Lord Kilmarnock all in black, his hair unpowdered in a bag, supported by Forster, the great Presbyterian, and Mr. Home, a young clergyman, his friend. Lord Balmerino followed, alone, in a blue coat, turned up with red, (his rebellious regimentals), a flannel waist coat, and his shroud beneath; their hearses following. They were conducted to a house near the scaffold: the room forwards had benches for spectators, in the second Lord Kilmarnock was put, and in the third backwards Lord Balmerino: all three chambers hung with black. Here they parted! Balmerino embraced the other and said, 'My lord, I wish I could suffer for both!' He had scarce left him, before he desired again to see him, and then asked

¹ The arms of maiden ladies and widows are borne on a lozenge.—T.

asked him, 'My Lord Kilmarnock, do you know anything of the resolution taken in our army, the day before the battle of Culloden, to put the English prisoners to death?' He replied, 'My Lord, I was not present; but since I came hither, I have had all the reason in the world to believe that there was such order taken; and I hear the Duke has the pocket-book with the order.' Balmerino answered, 'It was a lie raised to excuse their barbarity to us.'—Take notice, that the Duke's charging this on Lord Kilmarnock (certainly on misinformation) decided this unhappy man's fate! The most now pretended is, that it would have come to Lord Kilmarnock's turn to have given the word for the slaughter, as lieutenant-general, with the patent for which he was immediately drawn into the Rebellion, after having been staggered by his wife, her mother, his own poverty, and the defeat of Cope. He remained an hour and a half in the house, and shed tears. At last he came to the scaffold, certainly much terrified, but with a resolution that prevented his behaving in the least meanly or unlike a gentleman. He took no notice of the crowd, only to desire that the baize might be lifted up from the rails, that the mob might see the spectacle. He stood and prayed some time with Forster, who wept over him, exhorted and encouraged him. He delivered a long speech to the Sheriff, and with a noble manliness stuck to the recantation he had made at his trial; declaring he wished that all who embarked in the same cause might meet the same fate. He then took off his bag, coat and waistcoat, with great composure, and after some trouble put on a napkin-cap, and then several times tried the block; the executioner, who was
in

in white, with a white apron, out of tenderness concealing the axe behind himself. At last the Earl knelt down, with a visible unwillingness to depart, and after five minutes dropped his handkerchief, the signal, and his head was cut off at once, only hanging by a bit of skin, and was received in a scarlet cloth by four of the undertaker's men kneeling, who wrapped it up and put it into the coffin with the body; orders having been given not to expose the heads, as used to be the custom.

The scaffold was immediately new-strewed with sawdust, the block new-covered, the executioner new-dressed, and a new axe brought. Then came old Balmerino, treading with the air of a general. As soon as he mounted the scaffold, he read the inscription on his coffin, as he did again afterwards: he then surveyed the spectators, who were in amazing numbers, even upon masts of ships in the river; and pulling out his spectacles read a treasonable speech, which he delivered to the Sheriff, and said the young Pretender was so sweet a Prince, that flesh and blood could not resist following him; and lying down to try the block, he said, 'If I had a thousand lives, I would lay them all down here in the same cause.' He said, if he had not taken the sacrament the day before, he would have knocked down Williamson, the Lieutenant of the Tower, for his ill usage of him. He took the axe and felt it, and asked the headsman how many blows he had given Lord Kilmarnock; and gave him three guineas. Two clergymen, who attended him, coming up, he said, 'No, gentlemen, I believe you have already done me all the service you can.' Then he went to the corner of the scaffold, and called very loud
for

for the warder, to give him his perriwig, which he took off, and put on a night-cap of Scotch plaid, and then pulled off his coat and waistcoat and lay down; but being told he was on the wrong side, vaulted round, and immediately gave the sign by tossing up his arm, as if he were giving the signal for battle. He received three blows, but the first certainly took away all sensation. He was not a quarter of an hour on the scaffold; Lord Kilmarnock above half a one. Balmerino certainly died with the intrepidity of a hero, but with the insensibility of one too. As he walked from his prison to execution, seeing every window and top of house filled with spectators, he cried out, 'Look, look, how they are all piled up like rotten oranges!'

My Lady Townshend, who fell in love with Lord Kilmarnock at his trial, will go nowhere to dinner, for fear of meeting with a rebel-pie; she says everybody is so bloody-minded that they eat rebels! The Prince of Wales, whose intercession saved Lord Cromartie, says he did it in return for old Sir W. (Lady Cromartie's father) coming down out of his death-bed to vote against my father in the Chippenham election. If his Royal Highness had not countenanced inveteracy like that of Sir Gordon, he would have no occasion to exert his gratitude now in favour of rebels. His brother has plucked a very useful feather out of the cap of the ministry, by forbidding any application for posts in the army to be made to anybody but himself: a resolution, I dare say, he will keep as strictly and minutely as he does the discipline and dress of the army. Adieu!

P. S.

P. S. I have just received yours of Aug. 9th. You had not then heard of the second great battle of Placentia, which has already occasioned new instructions, or in effect, a recall being sent after Lord Sandwich.

16. *To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway*

[Ætæt 29]

Twickenham

June 8, 1747

You perceive by my date that I am got into a new camp, and have left my tub at Windsor. It is a little plaything-house that I got out of Mrs. Chenevix's shop,¹ and is the prettiest bauble you ever saw. It is set in enamelled meadows, with filigree hedges:

A small Euphrates through the piece is roll'd,
And little finches wave their wings in gold.²

Two delightful roads, that you would call dusty, supply me continually with coaches and chaises: barges as solemn as Barons of the Exchequer move under my window; Richmond Hill and Ham Walks bound my prospect; but, thank God! the Thames is between me and the Duchess of Queensberry. Dowagers as plenty as flounders inhabit all around, and Pope's ghost is just now skimming under the window by a most poetical moonlight. I have about land enough to keep such a farm as Noah's, when he set up in the ark with a pair of each kind; but my cottage is rather cleaner than I believe his was after
they

¹ A famous toy-shop.—WALPOLE.

² A parody of a couplet in Pope's *Epistle to Addison*.

they had been cooped up together forty days. The Chenevixes had tricked it out for themselves: up two pair of stairs is what they call Mr. Chenevix's library, furnished with three maps, one shelf, a bust of Sir Isaac Newton, and a lame telescope without any glasses. Lord John Sackville *predeceased* me here, and instituted certain games called *cricketalia*, which have been celebrated this very evening in honour of him in a neighbouring meadow.

You will think I have removed my philosophy from Windsor with my tea-things hither; for I am writing to you in all this tranquillity, while a Parliament is bursting about my ears. You know it is going to be dissolved: I am told, you are taken care of, though I don't know where, nor whether anybody that chooses you will quarrel with me because he does choose you, as that little bug the Marquis of Rockingham did; one of the calamities of my life which I have bore as abominably well as I do most about which I don't care. They say the Prince has taken up two hundred thousand pounds, to carry elections which he won't carry:—he had much better have saved it to buy the Parliament after it is chosen. A new set of peers are in embryo, to add more dignity to the silence of the House of Lords.

I make no remarks on your campaign,³ because, as you say, you do nothing at all; which, though very proper nutriment for a thinking head, does not do quite so well to write upon. If any one of you can but contrive to be shot upon your post, it
is

³ Mr. Conway was in Flanders with William, Duke of Cumberland.—WALPOLE.

is all we desire, shall look upon it as a great curiosity, and will take care to set up a monument to the person so slain; as we are doing by vote to Captain Cornewall, who was killed at the beginning of the action in the Mediterranean four years ago. In the present dearth of glory, he is canonized; though, poor man! he had been tried twice the year before for cowardice.

I could tell you much election news, none else; though not being thoroughly attentive to so important a subject, as to be sure one ought to be, I might now and then mistake and give you a candidate for Durham in place of one for Southampton, or name the returning officer instead of the candidate. In general, I believe, it is much as usual—those sold in detail that afterwards will be sold in the representation—the ministers bribing Jacobites to choose friends of their own—the name of well-wishers to the present establishment, and Patriots, outbidding ministers that they may make the better market of their own patriotism:— in short, all England, under some name or other, is just now to be bought and sold; though, whenever we become posterity and forefathers, we shall be in high repute for wisdom and virtue. My great-great-grandchildren will figure me with a white beard down to my girdle; and Mr. Pitt's will believe him unspotted enough to have walked over nine hundred hot ploughshares, without hurting the sole of his foot. How merry my ghost will be, and shake its ears to hear itself quoted as a person of consummate prudence! Adieu, dear Harry!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

Dear

17. To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway

[Aetat 30]

Strawberry Hill

Aug. 29, 1748

Dear Harry,—Whatever you may think, a campaign at Twickenham furnishes as little matter for a letter as an abortive one in Flanders. I can't say indeed that my generals wear black wigs, but they have long full-bottomed hoods which cover as little entertainment to the full.

There's General my Lady Castlecomer, and General my lady Dowager Ferrers! Why, do you think I can extract more out of them than you can out of Hawley or Honeywood? Your old women dress, go to the Duke's levee, see that the soldiers cock their hats right, sleep after dinner, and soak with their led-captains till bed-time, and tell a thousand lies of what they never did in their youth. Change hats for head-clothes, the rounds for visits, and led-captains for toad-eaters, and the life is the very same. In short, these are the people I live in the midst of, though not with; and it is for want of more important histories that I have wrote to you so seldom; not, I give you my word, from the least negligence. My present and sole occupation is planting, in which I have made great progress, and talk very learnedly with the nurserymen, except that now and then a lettuce run to seed overturns all my botany, as I have more than once taken it for a curious West Indian flowering shrub. Then the deliberation with which trees grow, is
extremely

extremely inconvenient to my natural impatience, I lament living in so barbarous an age, when we are come to so little perfection in gardening I am persuaded that a hundred and fifty years hence it will be as common to remove oaks a hundred and fifty years old, as it is now to transplant tulip-roots. I have even begun a treatise or panegyric on the great discoveries made by posterity in all arts and sciences, wherein I shall particularly descant on the great and cheap convenience of making trout-rivers—one of the improvements which Mrs. Kerwood wondered Mr. Hedges would not make at his country-house, but which was not then quite so common as it will be. I shall talk of a secret for roasting a wild boar and a whole pack of hounds alive, without hurting them, so that the whole chase may be brought up to table; and for this secret, the Duke of Newcastle's grandson, if he can ever get a son, is to give a hundred thousand pounds. Then the delightfulness of having whole groves of humming-birds, tame tigers taught to fetch and carry, pocket spying-glasses to see all that is doing in China, with a thousand other toys, which we now look upon as impracticable, and which pert posterity would laugh in one's face for staring at, while they are offering rewards for perfecting discoveries, of the principles of which we have not the least conception! If ever this book should come forth, I must expect to have all the learned in arms against me, who measure all knowledge backward: some of them have discovered symptoms of all arts in Homer; and Pineda had so much faith in the accomplishments of his ancestors, that he believed Adam understood all sciences but politics. But as these great champions
for

for our forefathers are dead, and Boileau not alive to hitch me into a verse with Perrault, I am determined to admire the learning of posterity, especially being convinced that half our present knowledge sprung from discovering the errors of what had formerly been called so. I don't think I shall ever make any great discoveries myself, and therefore shall be content to propose them to my descendants, like my Lord Bacon, who, as Dr. Shaw says very prettily in his preface to Boyle, 'had the art of inventing arts': or rather like a Marquis of Worcester, of whom I have seen a little book which he calls *A Century of Inventions*, where he has set down a hundred machines to do impossibilities with, and not a single direction how to make the machines themselves.

If I happen to be less punctual in my correspondence than I intend to be, you must conclude I am writing my book, which being designed for a panegyric, will cost me a great deal of trouble. The dedication, with your leave, shall be addressed to your son that is coming, or, with my Lady Ailesbury's¹ leave, to your ninth son, who will be unborn nearer to the time I am writing of; always provided that she does not bring three at once, like my Lady Berkeley.

Well! I have here set you the example of writing nonsense when one has nothing to say, and shall take it ill if you don't keep up the correspondence on the same foot. Adieu!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

I

¹ Conway's wife. She was the only daughter of the fourth Duke of Argyll, and married as her first husband the third Earl of Ailesbury. He died in 1746, and she married Conway the following year. She died in 1803.

18. To Horace Mann

[Ætæt 31]

Strawberry Hill

May 3, 1749

I am come hither for a few days, to repose myself after a torrent of diversions, and am writing to you in my charming bow-window with a tranquillity and satisfaction which, I fear, I am grown old enough to prefer to the hurry of amusements, in which the whole world has lived for this last week. We have at last celebrated the Peace, and that as much in extremes as we generally do everything, whether we have reason to be glad or sorry, pleased or angry. Last Tuesday it was proclaimed: the King did not go to St. Paul's, but at night the whole town was illuminated. The next day was what was called 'a jubilee-masquerade in the Venetian manner' at Ranelagh: it had nothing Venetian in it, but was far the best understood and the prettiest spectacle I ever saw; nothing in a fairy tale ever surpassed it. One of the proprietors, who is a German, and belongs to court, had got my Lady Yarmouth to persuade the King to order it. It began at three o'clock and, about five, people of fashion began to go. When you entered, you found the whole garden filled with masks and spread with tents, which remained all night *very commodely*. In one quarter was a May-pole dressed with garlands, and people dancing round it to a tabor and pipe and rustic music, all masked, as were all the various bands of music that were disposed in different parts of the garden; some like huntsmen with French horns, some like peasants, and a troop of harlequins and scarab-mouches

mouches in the little open temple on the mount. On the canal was a sort of gondola, adorned with flags and streamers, and filled with music, rowing about. All round the outside of the amphitheatre were shops, filled with Dresden china, japan, etc., and all the shopkeepers in mask. The amphitheatre was illuminated; and in the middle was a circular bower, composed of all kinds of firs in tubs, from twenty to thirty feet high: under them orange-trees, with small lamps in each orange, and below them all sorts of the finest auriculas in pots; and festoons of natural flowers hanging from tree to tree. Between the arches too were firs, and smaller ones in the balconies above. There were booths for tea and wine, gaming-tables and dancing, and about two thousand persons. In short, it pleased me more than anything I ever saw. It is to be once more, and probably finer as to dresses, as there has since been a subscription masquerade, and people will go in their rich habits. The next day were the fireworks, which by no means answered the expense, the length of preparation, and the expectation that had been raised: indeed, for a week before, the town was like a country fair, the streets filled from morning to night, scaffolds building wherever you could or could not see, and coaches in the Park and on every house, the guards, and the machine itself, which was very beautiful, was all that was worth seeing. The rockets, and whatever was thrown up into the air, succeeded mighty well; but the wheels, and all that was to compose the principal part, were pitiful and ill-conducted, with no changes of coloured fires and shapes: the illumination was mean, and lighted so slowly that scarce anybody had patience to wait the finishing and then,
what

what contributed to the awkwardness of the whole, was the right pavilion catching fire and being burnt down in the middle of the show. The King, the Duke, and Princess Emily saw it from the Library, with their courts: the Prince and Princess, with their children, from Lady Middlesex's; no place being provided for them, nor any invitation given to the Library. The Lords and Commons had galleries built for them and the chief citizens along the rails of the Mall: the Lords had four tickets apiece, and each Commoner, at first, but two, till the Speaker bounced and obtained a third. Very little mischief was done, and but two persons killed: at Paris, there were forty killed and near three hundred wounded, by a dispute between the French and Italians in the management, who, quarrelling for precedence in lighting the fires, both lighted at once and blew up the whole. Our mob was extremely tranquil, and very unlike those I remember in my father's time, when it was a measure in the opposition to work up everything to mischief, the Excise and the French players, the Convention and the Gin Act. We are as much now in the opposite extreme, and in general so pleased with the Peace, that I could not help being struck with a passage I read lately in Pasquier an old French author, who says, 'that in the time of Francis I the French used to call their creditors "Des Anglois", from the facility with which the English gave credit to them in all treaties, though they had broken so many.' On Saturday we had a serenata at the Opera-house, called *Peace in Europe*, but it was a wretched performance. On Monday there was a subscription masquerade, much fuller than that of last year, but
not

not so agreeable or so various in dresses. The King was well disguised in an old-fashioned English habit, and much pleased with somebody who desired him to hold their cup as they were drinking tea. The Duke had a dress of the same kind, but was so immensely corpulent that he looked like *Cacofogo*, the drunken captain in *Rule a Wife and have a Wife*. The Duchess of Richmond was a Lady Mayoress in the time of James I; and Lord Delawar, Queen Elizabeth's porter, from a picture in the guard-chamber at Kensington: they were admirable masks. Lady Rochford, Miss Evelyn, Miss Bishop, Lady Strafford, and Mrs. Pitt, were in vast beauty; particularly the last, who had a red veil, which made her look gloriously handsome. I forgot Lady Kildare. Mr. Conway was the Duke in *Don Quixote*, and the finest figure I ever saw. Miss Chudleigh¹ was Iphigenia, but so naked that you would have taken her for Andromeda; and Lady Betty Smithson had such a pyramid of baubles upon her head, that she was exactly the Princess of Babylon in *Grammont*.²

19. To Horace Mann

[Aetat 32]

Arlington Street

April 2, 1750

You will not wonder so much at our earthquakes as at the effects they have had. All the women in town have taken them
up

¹ Elizabeth, daughter of Colonel Thomas Chudleigh, Governor of Chelsea Hospital; m. 1. (privately, in 1744) the Hon. Augustus John Hervey (afterwards third Earl of Bristol); 2. (1769, during the lifetime of her first husband) Evelyn Pierrepont, second Duke of Kingston. She was tried for bigamy in 1776, and found guilty. After her trial she left England. She died abroad in 1788.—T.

² The remainder of this letter is omitted.

up upon the foot of *Judgements*; and the clergy, who have had no windfalls of a long season, have driven horse and foot into this opinion. There has been a shower of sermons and exhortations: Secker, the jesuitical Bishop of Oxford, began the mode. He heard the women were all going out of town to avoid the next shock; and so, for fear of losing his Easter offerings, he set himself to advise them to await God's good pleasure in fear and trembling. But what is more astonishing, Sherlock, who has much better sense, and much less of the Popish confessor, has been running a race with him for the old ladies, and has written a pastoral letter, of which ten thousand were sold in two days; and fifty thousand have been subscribed for, since the two first editions. You never read so impudent, so absurd a piece! This earthquake, which has done no hurt, in a country where no earthquake ever did any, is sent, according to the Bishop, to punish bawdy prints, bawdy books (in one of which Mrs. Pilkington drew his Lordship's picture) gaming, drinking—(no, I think, drinking and avarice, those orthodox vices, are omitted) and all other sins, natural or not, which he makes a principal ingredient in the composition of an earthquake, because not having been able to answer a late piece, which Middleton¹ has writ against him, he has turned the Doctor over to God for punishment, even in this world. Here is an epigram, which this subject put into my head:

When Whitfield² preaches, and when Whiston² writes,
All cry that madness dictates either's flights.

When

¹ Conyers Middleton (1683-1750), divine and controversialist, author of the *Life of Cicero*. He was a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and an occasional correspondent of Walpole.

² The celebrated evangelists.

When Sherlock writes, or canting Secker preaches,
All think good sense inspires what either teaches.
Why, when all four for the same gospel fight,
Should two be crazy, two be in the right?
Plain is the reason—every son of Eve
Thinks the two madmen, what they teach, believe.

I told you the women talked of going out of town: several families are literally gone, and many more going to-day and to-morrow; for what adds to the absurdity, is, that the second shock having happened exactly a month after the former, it prevails that there will be a third on Thursday next, another month, which is to swallow up London. I am almost ready to burn my letter now I have begun it, lest you should think I am laughing at you: but, it is so true, that Arthur of White's told me last night, that he should put off the last ridotto, which was to be on Thursday, because he hears nobody would come to it. I have advised several who are going to keep their next earthquake in the country, to take the bark for it, as it is so periodic. Dick Leveson and Mr. Rigby, who had supped and stayed late at Bedford House the other night, knocked at several doors, and in a watchman's voice cried, 'Past four o'clock, and a dreadful earthquake!' But I have done with this ridiculous panic: two pages were too much to talk of it.

We have had nothing in Parliament but trade bills, on one of which the Speaker humbled the arrogance of Sir John Barnard, who had reflected upon the proceedings of the House. It is to break up on Thursday se'nnight, and the King goes this day fortnight. He has made Lord Vere Beauclerc a baron, at the solicitation of the Pelhams, as this Lord had resigned
upon

upon a pique with Lord Sandwich. Lord Anson, who is treading in the same path, and leaving the Bedfords to follow his father-in-law, the Chancellor, is made a privy councillor, with Sir Thomas Robinson and Lord Hyndford. Lord Conway is to be an earl, and Sir John Rawdon (whose follies you remember, and whose boasted loyalty of having been kicked downstairs for not drinking the Pretender's health, though even that was false, is at last rewarded) and Sir John Vesey are to be Irish lords; and a Sir William Beauchamp Proctor, and a Mr. Loyd, Knights of the Bath.

I was entertained the other night at the house of much such a creature as Sir John Rawdon, and one whom you remember too, Naylor. He has a wife who keeps the most indecent house of all those that are called decent: every *Sunday* she has a counterband assembly: I had had a card for *Monday* a fortnight before. As the day was new, I expected a great assembly, but found scarce six persons. I asked where the company was—I was answered, 'Oh! they are not come yet: they will be here presently; they all supped here last night, stayed till morning, and I suppose are not up yet.' In the bedchamber I found two beds, which is too cruel to poor Naylor, to tell the whole town that he is the only man in it who does not lie with his wife!

My Lord Bolingbroke has lost his wife. When she was dying, he acted grief; flung himself upon her bed, and asked her if she could forgive him. I never saw her, but have heard her wit and parts excessively commended. Dr. Middleton told me a compliment she made him two years ago, which I
thought

thought pretty. She said she ~~was~~ persuaded that he was a very great writer for she understood his works better than any other English book, and that she had observed that the best writers were always the most intelligible.

Wednesday

I had not time to finish my letter on Monday. I return to the earthquake, which I had mistaken; it is to be to-day. This frantic terror prevails so much, that within these three days seven hundred and thirty coaches have been counted passing Hyde Park corner, with whole parties removing into the country. Here is a good advertisement which I cut out of the papers to-day:

‘On Monday next will be published (price 6*d.*) a true and exact List of all the Nobility and Gentry who have left, or shall leave, this place through fear of another Earthquake.’

Several women have made earthquake gowns; that is, warm gowns to sit out of doors all to-night. These are of the more courageous. One woman, still more heroic, is come to town on purpose: she says, all her friends are in London, and she will not survive them. But what will you think of Lady Catherine Pelham, Lady Frances Arundel, and Lord and Lady Galway, who go this evening to an inn ten miles out of town, where they are to play at brag till five in the morning, and then come back—I suppose, to look for the bones of their husbands and families under the rubbish. The prophet of all this (next to the Bishop of London, whom Mr. Chute and I have agreed not to believe till he has been three days in a whale’s belly) is a trooper

trooper of Lord Delawar's, who was yesterday sent to Bedlam. His *colonel* sent to the man's wife, and asked her if her husband had ever been disordered before. She cried, 'Oh, dear! my Lord, he is not mad now; if your *Lordship* would but get any *sensible* man to examine him, you would find he is quite in his right mind.'¹

20. To George Montagu

[Ætæt 32]

Arlington Street

June 23, 1750

As I am not Vanneck'd,¹ I have been in no hurry to thank you for your congratulation, and to assure you that I never knew what solid happiness was till I was married. Your Trevors and Rices dined with me last week at Strawberry Hill, and would have had me answer you upon the matrimonial tone, but I thought I should imitate cheerfulness in that style as ill as if I really were married. I have had another of your friends with me there some time, whom I adore, Mr. Bentley;² he has
more

¹ Remainder of letter omitted.

² The announcement of the engagement of a cousin of Walpole's to a Miss Van Neck had just been announced.

² Richard Bentley (1708-1782), son of the famous scholar of the same name. Bentley's wit and artistic talents were peculiarly acceptable to Horace Walpole. . . . He made numerous Gothic designs for Strawberry Hill and illustrated the edition of Gray's *Poems* published by Walpole in 1753. . . . In 1761 their friendly relations came to an end. Various reasons have been assigned for the quarrel—Bentley's impatience of patronage (according to his nephew Richard Cumberland, the playwright)—an attempt on Bentley's part to borrow money from Walpole—or (according to the latter's own account to Cole) Bentley's being 'forward to introduce his wife at his (Walpole's) house when people of the first fashion were there.' Before their parting Walpole had procured for Bentley a small place, probably in the Custom House, which he afterwards resigned. . . . Lord Bute subsequently patronised him and gave him two sinecures. When he died Walpole invested a sum in the funds for his several children. From a letter of George Hardinge to Walpole, dated July 17, 1780, it appears that Walpole assisted Bentley long after their acquaintance ceased:—'at Sir John Griffin's the other day I met *your* Bentley, whom

more sense, judgement, and wit, more taste, and more misfortunes, than sure ever met in any man. I have heard that Dr. Bentley, regretting his wanting taste for all such learning as his, which is the very want of taste, used to sigh and say, 'Tully had his Marcus.' If the sons resembled as much as the fathers did, at least in vanity, I would be the modest agreeable Marcus. Mr. Bentley tells me that you press him much to visit you at Hawkhurst. I advise him, and assure him he will make his fortune under you there; that you are an agent from the Board of Trade to the smugglers, and wallow in contraband wine, tea, and silk handkerchiefs. I found an old newspaper t'other day, with a list of outlawed smugglers; there was John Price, *alias* Miss Marjoram, Bob Plunder, Bricklayer Tom, and Robin Cursemother, all of Hawkhurst in Kent. When Miss Harriet is thoroughly hardened at Buxton, as I hear she is by lying in a public room with the whole Wells, from drinking waters, I conclude she will come to sip nothing but run brandy.

As jolly and abominable a life as she may have been leading, I defy all her enormities to equal a party of pleasure that I had t'other night. I shall relate it to you to show you the manners of the age, which are always as entertaining to a person fifty miles off as to one born an hundred and fifty years after the time. I had a card from Lady Caroline Petersham to go with her to Vauxhall. I went accordingly to her house at half an hour

I was glad to see, as a very singular genius. I discovered by an accident that you are still generous to him.' . . . Cole records Bentley's opinion of Walpole as a letter writer:— 'Walpole was the best letter writer that ever took pen in hand; . . . he wrote with the greatest ease imaginable, with company in the room, and even talking to other people at the time.'—T.

hour after seven, and found her and the little Ashe,¹ or the pollard Ashe, as they call her; they had just finished their last layer of red, and looked as handsome as crimson could make them. On the cabinet stood a pair of Dresden candlesticks, a present from the virgin hands of Sir John Bland;² the branches of each formed a little bower over a cock and hen treading, yes, literally! We issued into the Mall to assemble our company, which was all the town, if we could get it; for just so many had been summoned, except Harry Vane, whom we met by *chance*. We mustered the Duke of Kingston, whom Lady Caroline says she has been trying for these seven years, but alas! his beauty is at the fall of the leaf, Lord March,³ Mr. Whithed, a pretty Miss Beauclerc, and a very foolish Miss Sparre. These two damsels were trusted by their mothers for the first time of their lives to the matronly conduct of Lady Caroline. As we sailed up the Mall with all our colours flying, Lord Petersham, with his nose and legs twisted to every point of crossness, strode by us on the outside, and repassed again on the return. At the end of the Mall she called to him; he would not answer: she gave a familiar spring, and, between laugh and confusion, ran up to him, 'My Lord, my Lord! why, you don't see us!' We advanced at a little distance, not a little awkward in expectation how all this would end, for my Lord never stirred his hat, or took the least notice of anybody

¹ Miss Elizabeth Ashe, another notorious adventuress of high parentage.

² Sir John Bland, seventh baronet. He ruined himself at play, and committed suicide in 1755.—T.

³ Afterwards fourth Duke of Queensberry. Perhaps the most celebrated *roué* of the eighteenth century.

body: she said, 'Do you go with us, or are you going anywhere else?'—'I don't go with you, I am going somewhere else'; and away he stalked, as sulky as a ghost that nobody will speak to first. We got into the best order we could, and marched to our barge, with a boat of French horns attending, and little Ashe singing. We paraded some time up the river, and at last embarked at Vauxhall. There, if we had so pleased, we might have had the vivacity of our party increased by a quarrel, for a Mrs. Loyd, who is supposed to be married to Lord Haddington, seeing the two girls following Lady C. and Miss Ashe, said aloud, 'Poor girls, I am sorry to see them in such bad company.' Miss Sparre who desired nothing so much as the fun of seeing a duel, a thing which, though she is fifteen, she has never been so lucky to see—took due pains to make Lord March resent this; but he, who is very lively and agreeable, laughed her out of this charming frolic with a great deal of humour. Here we picked up Lord Granby, arrived very drunk, from Jenny's Whim;⁴ where, instead of going to old Stratford's catacombs to make honourable love, he had dined with Lady Fitzroy, and left her and eight other women and four other men playing at brag. He would fain have made over his honourable love upon any terms to poor Miss Beauclerc, who is very modest, and did not know at all what to do with his whispers or his hands. He then addressed himself to the Sparre, who was very well disposed to receive both; but the tide of champagne turned, he hiccupped at the reflection of his

⁴ A tavern at Chelsea.—T.

his marriage, of which he is wondrous sick, and only proposed to the girl to shut themselves up and rail at the world for three weeks. If all the adventures don't conclude as you expect in the beginning of a paragraph, you must not wonder, for I am not making a history, but relating one strictly as it happened, and I think with full entertainment enough to content you. At last we assembled in our booth, Lady Caroline in the front, with the vizer of her hat erect, and looking gloriously jolly and handsome. She had fetched my brother Orford from the next box, where he was enjoying himself with his Norsa and *petite partie*, to help us mince chickens. We minced seven chickens into a china dish, which Lady C. stewed over a lamp with three pats of butter and a flagon of water, stirring, and rattling, and laughing, and we every minute expecting to have the dish fly about our ears. She had brought Betty,¹ the fruit-girl, with hampers of strawberries and cherries from Rogers's, and made her wait upon us, and then made her sup by us at a little table. The conversation was no less lively than the whole transaction.—There was a Mr. O'Brien arrived from Ireland, who would get the Duchess of Manchester from Mr. Hussey, if she were still at liberty. I took up the biggest hautboy in the dish, and said to Lady Car., 'Madam, Miss Ashe desires you will eat this O'Brien strawberry'; she replied immediately, 'I won't, you hussey!'—You may imagine the laugh this reply occasioned.—After the tempest was a little calmed, the Pollard said, 'Now, how anybody would spoil this story that

¹ 'The Queen of Apple-women.'

that was to repeat it, and say, I won't, you jade!' In short, the whole air of our party was sufficient, as you will easily imagine, to take up the whole attention of the garden; so much so, that from eleven o'clock till half an hour after one we had the whole concourse round our booth: at last, they came into the little gardens of each booth on the sides of ours, till Harry Vane took up a bumper, and drank their healths, and was proceeding to treat them with still greater freedom. It was three o'clock before we got home.—I think I have told you the chief passages. Lord Granby's temper had been a little ruffled the night before: the Prince had invited him and Dick Lyttelton to Kew, where he won eleven hundred pound of the latter and eight of the former, then cut, and told them he would play with them no longer, for he saw they played so idly, that they were capable of *losing more than they would like*.

Adieu! I expect in return for this long tale that you will tell me some of your frolics with Robin Cursemother, and some of Miss Marjoram's *bon-mots*.

Yours ever,

H. W.

P. S. Dr. Middleton called on me yesterday: he is come to town to consult his physician for a jaundice and swelled legs, symptoms which, the doctor tells him, and which he believes, can be easily cured; I think him visibly broke and near his end. He lately advised me to marry, on the sense of his own happiness; but if anybody had advised him to the contrary, at his time of life, I believe he would not have broke so fast.

Monday

21. *To George Montagu*[*Aetat 34*]

The St. James's Evening Post
Thursday, Jan. 9, 1752

Monday being Twelfth-day, his Majesty according to annual custom offered myrrh, frankincense, and a small bit of gold; and at night, in commemoration of the three *Kings* or *Wise men*, the King and Royal Family played at hazard for the benefit of a prince of the blood. There were above eleven thousand pounds upon the table; his most sacred Majesty won three guineas, and his R.H. the Duke, three thousand four hundred pounds.

On Saturday was landed at the Custom House a large box of truffles, being a present to the Earl of Lincoln from Theobald Taaffe, Esq., who is shortly expected home from his travels in foreign parts.

To-morrow the new-born son of the Earl of Egremont is to be baptized, when his Majesty, and the Earl of Granville (if he is able to stand) and the Duchess of Somerset, are to be sponsors.

We are assured that on Tuesday last, the surprising strong woman was exhibited at the Countess of Holderness's, before a polite assembly of persons of the first quality: and some time this week, the two dwarfs will play at brag at Madame Holman's. N.B. The strong man, who was to have performed at Mrs. Nugent's, is indisposed.

There is lately arrived at the Lord Carpenter's a curious
male

male chimpanzee, which has had the honour of being shown before the ugliest princes in Europe, who all express their approbation; and we hear that he intends to offer himself a candidate to represent the city of Westminster at the next general election. Note: he wears breeches, and there is a gentlewoman to attend the ladies.

Last night the Hon. and Rev. Mr. James Brudenel was admitted a doctor of opium in the ancient university of White's, being received *ad eundem* by his Grace the Rev. father in chess the Duke of Devonshire, president, and the rest of the senior fellows. At the same time the Lord Rob. Bertie and Col. Barrington were rejected, on account of some deficiency of formality in their testimonials.

Letters from Grosvenor Street mention a dreadful apparition, which has appeared for several nights at the house of the Countess Temple, which has occasioned several of her ladyship's domestics to leave her service, except the coachman, who has drove her sons and nephews for several years, and is not afraid of spectres. The coroner's inquest have brought in their verdict lunacy.

Last week the Lord Downe received at the Treasury the sum of an hundred kisses from the Auditor of the Exchequer, being the reward for shooting at a highwayman.

On Tuesday the operation of shaving was happily performed on the upper lip of her Grace the Duchess of Newcastle, by a celebrated artist from Paris, sent over on purpose by the Earl of Albermarle. The performance lasted but one minute and three seconds, to the great joy of that noble family; and in
consideration

consideration of his great care and expedition, his Grace has settled four hundred pounds a year upon him for life. We hear that he is to have the honour of shaving the heads of the Lady Catherine Pelham, the Duchess of Queensberry, and several other persons of quality.

By authority, on Sunday next will be opened the Romish chapel at Norfolk House; no persons will be admitted but such as are known well-wishers to the present happy establishment.

Mass will begin exactly when the English liturgy is finished.

At the theatre royal in the House of Lords, *The Royal Slave*, with *Lethe*.

At the theatre in St. Stephen's Chapel, *The Fool in Fashion*.

The Jews are desired to meet on the 20th inst. at the sign of Fort L'Évêque in Pharaoh Street, to commemorate the noble struggle made by one of their brethren in support of his property.

Deserted—Miss Ashe.

Lost, an opposition.

To be let, an ambassador's masquerade, the gentleman going abroad.

To be sold, the whole nation. . . .¹

Lately published, *The Analogy of Political and Private Quarrels*, or the Art of healing family differences by widening them; on these words, Do evil that good may ensue. A sermon preached before the Rt. Honble. Henry Pelham, and the rest
of

¹ Passage omitted.—T.

of the society for propagating Christian charity, by Wm. Leveson, chaplain to her R.H. the Princess Amelia; and now printed at the desire of several of the family.

For capital weaknesses, the Duke of Newcastle's true spirit of crocodiles.

Given gratis at the Turn-stile, the corner of Lincoln's Inn Fields,² Anodyne Stars and Garters.

22. *To George Montagu*

[Aetat 34]

Arlington Street

May 12, 1752

You deserve no charity, for you never write but to ask it. When you are tired of yourself and the country, you think over all London, and consider who will be proper to send you an account of it. Take notice, I won't be your gazetteer; nor is my time come for being a dowager, a maker of news, a day-labourer in scandal. If you care for nobody but for what they can tell you, look you, you must provide yourself elsewhere.—The town is empty, nothing in it but flabby mackerel, and wooden gooseberry tarts, and a hazy east wind.—My sister is gone to Paris, I go to Strawberry Hill in three days for the summer, if summer there will ever be any. If you want news, you must send to Ireland, where there is almost a civil war, between the Lord Lieutenant and Primate on one side (observe, I don't tell you what *side* that is) and the Speaker on the other, who carries questions by wholesale in the House of Commons
against

² The Duke of Newcastle's town house was in Lincoln's Inn Fields.—T.

against the Castle—and the *teterrima belli causa* is not the common one.

Reams of scandalous verses and ballads are come over, too bad to send you, if I had them, but I really have not—what is more provoking for the Duke of Dorset, an address is come over directly to the King (not as usual, through the channel of the Lord Lieutenant) to assure him of their great loyalty, and apprehensions of being misrepresented. This is all I know, and you see, most imperfectly.

I was t'other night to see what is now grown the fashion, Mother Midnight's Oratory—it appeared the lowest buffoonery in the world even to me who am used to my uncle Horace. There is a bad oration to ridicule, what it is too like, Orator Henley;¹ all the rest is perverted music. There is a man who plays so nimbly on the kettledrum, that he has reduced that noisy instrument to an object of sight; for, if you don't see the tricks with his hands, it is no better than ordinary. Another plays on a violin and trumpet together. Another mimics a bag-pipe with a German flute, and makes it full as disagreeable. There is an admired dulcimer, a favourite salt-box, and a really curious jew's-harp. Two or three men intend to persuade you that they play on a broomstick, which is drolly brought in, carefully shrouded in a case, so as to be mistaken for a bassoon or bass-viol; but they succeed in nothing but the action. The last fellow imitates curtsying to a French horn. There are twenty medley overtures, and a man who speaks a prologue and epilogue, in which he counterfeits all the actors
and

¹ An eccentric preacher who was arrested for treasonous utterances.

and singers upon earth: in short, I have long been convinced, that what I used to imagine the most difficult thing in the world, mimicry, is the easiest; for one has seen for these two or three years, at Foote's and the other theatres, that when they lost one mimic, they called odd man, and another came and succeeded just as well.

Adieu! I have told you much more than I intended, and much more than I could conceive I had to say, except how does Miss Montagu!

Yours ever,

H. W.

P. S. Did you hear Capt. Hotham's *bon mot* on Sir Th. Robinson's making an assembly from the top of his house to the bottom? He said, he wondered so many people would go to Sir Thomas's, as he treated them all *de haut en bas*!

23. To George Montagu

[Aetat 34]

Strawberry Hill

June 6, 1752

I have just been in London for two or three days, to fetch an adventure, and am returned to my hill and my castle. . . . I can't say I lost my labour, as you shall hear. Last Sunday night, being as wet a night as you shall see in a summer's day, about half an hour after twelve, I was just come home from White's, and undressing to step into bed, I heard Harry, who you know lies forwards roar out, 'Stop thief!' and run downstairs—I ran after him—don't be frightened; I have not lost
one

one enamel, nor bronze; nor have not been shot through the head again.¹ A gentlewoman, who lives at Govr. Pitt's, next door but one to me, and where Mr. Bentley used to live, was going to bed too, and heard people breaking into Mr. Freeman's house, who, like some acquaintance of mine in Albermarle Street, goes out of town, locks up his doors, and leaves the community to watch his furniture. N.B. It was broken open but two years ago, and I and all the chairmen vow they shall steal his house away another time, before we will trouble our heads about it. Well, madam called out, 'Watch'; two men who were sentinels, ran away, and Harry's voice after them. Down came I, and with a posse of chairmen, and watchmen found the third fellow in the area of Mr. Freeman's house. Mayhap you have seen all this in the papers, little thinking who commanded the detachment. Harry fetched a blunderbuss to invite the thief up. One of the chairmen, who was drunk, cried, 'Give me the blunderbuss, I'll shoot him!' But as the general's head was a little cooler, he prevented military execution, and took the prisoner without bloodshed, intending to make his triumphal entry into the metropolis of Twickenham with his captive tied to the wheels of his post-chaise.—I find my style rises so much with the recollection of my victory, that I don't know how to descend to tell you that the enemy was a carpenter, and had a leather apron on. The next step was to share my glory with my friends. I dispatched a courier to White's for George Selwyn, who, you know, loves nothing
upon

¹ A reference to his encounter with Maclean, the highwayman in Hyde Park.

upon earth so well as a criminal, except the execution of him. It happened very luckily that the drawer, who received my message, has very lately been robbed himself, and had the wound fresh in his memory. He stalked up into the club-room, stopped short, and with a hollow trembling voice said, 'Mr. Selwyn! Mr. Walpole's compliments to you, and he has got a house-breaker for you!' A squadron immediately came to reinforce me, and having summoned Moreland with the keys of the fortress, we marched into the house to search for more of the gang. Col. Seabright with his sword drawn went first, and then I, exactly the figure of Robinson Crusoe, with a candle and lanthorn in my hand, a carabine upon my shoulder, my hair wet and about my ears, and in a linen night-gown and slippers. We found the kitchen shutters forced, but not finished, and in the area a tremendous bag of tools, a hammer large enough for the hand of a Jael, and six chisels! All which *opima spolia*, as there was no temple of Jupiter Capitolinus in the neighbourhood, I was reduced to offer on the altar of Sir Thomas Clarges.

I am now, as I told you, returned to my plough with as much humility and pride as any of my great predecessors. We lead quite a rural life, have had a sheep-shearing, a hay-making, a syllabub under the cow, and a fishing—of three gold-fish out of Poyang,² for a present to Madame Clive.³ They breed with me excessively, and are grown to the size of small perch. Everything grows, if tempests would let it; but I have had

two

² The gold-fish pond at Strawberry Hill in which the cat, immortalized by Gray, was drowned.

³ Kitty Clive, the actress, who lived at Twickenham.

two of my largest trees broke to-day with the wind, and another last week. I am much obliged to you for the flower you offer me, but by the description it is an Austrian rose, and I have several now in bloom. Mr. Bentley is with me, finishing the drawings for Gray's *Odes*; there are some mandarin-cats fishing for gold-fish, which will delight you; *au reste*, he is just where he was; he has heard something about a journey to Haughton¹ to the great Cu of Haticuleo, but it don't seem fixed, unless he hears farther. Did he tell you the Rices and your aunt Cosby had dined here from Hampton Court? The minionette beauty looks mighty well in his grandmother's jointure.

The *Memoires*² of last year are quite finished, but I shall add some pages of notes, that will not want anecdotes. Discontents, of the nature of those about Windsor Park, are spreading about Richmond. Lord Brook, who has taken the late Duchess of Rutland's at Petersham, asked for a key; the answer was (mind it, for it was tolerably mortifying to an Earl) *that the Princess had already refused one to my Lord Chancellor*. By the way, you know that reverend head of the law is frequently shut up here with my Lady Montrath, who is rich and as tipsy as Caco-fogo in the comedy. What a jumble of avarice and lewdness, dignity and claret!

You will be pleased with a story of Lord Bury, that is come from Scotland. He is quartered at Inverness: the magistrates

¹ The seat of the Earl of Halifax (a Montagu) here referred to as the 'great Cu of Haticuleo.'

² *Memoirs of the Last Ten Years of the Reign of George II.* Montagu and Gray appear to be the only persons who knew that Walpole was writing this and his *Memoirs of George III.*

trates invited him to an entertainment with fire-works, which they intended to give on the morrow for the Duke's birth-day. He thanked them, assured them he would represent their zeal to his R. Highness; but did not doubt but it would be more agreeable to him, if they postponed it to the day following, the anniversary of the battle of Culloden. They stared, said they could not promise on their own authority, but would go and consult their body. They returned, told him it was unprecedented, and could not be complied with. Lord Bury replied, he was sorry they had not given a negative at once, for he had mentioned it to his soldiers, who would not bear a disappointment, and was afraid it would provoke them to some outrage upon the town. This did: they celebrated Culloden. Adieu! My compliments to Miss Montagu.

Yours ever,

H. W.

24. To Richard Bentley

[Aetat 37]

Strawberry Hill

November 3, 1754

I have finished all my parties, and am drawing towards a conclusion here: the Parliament meets in ten days: the House, I hear, will be extremely full—curiosity drawing as many to town as party used to do. The minister ¹ in the House of Lords is a new sight in these days.

Mr. Chute and I have been at Mr. Barrett's at Belhouse; I
never

¹ The Duke of Newcastle.—WALPOLE.

never saw a place for which one did not wish, so totally void of faults. What he has done is in Gothic, and very true, though not up to the perfection of the Committee.² The hall is pretty: the great dining-room hung with good family pictures; among which is his ancestor, the Lord Dacre who was hanged. I remember when Barrett was first initiated in the College of Arms by the present Dean of Exeter at Cambridge, he was overjoyed at the first ancestor he put up, who was one of the murderers of Thomas Becket. The chimney-pieces, except one little miscarriage into total Ionic (he could not resist statuary and Siena marble) are all of a good King James the First Gothic. I saw the heronry so fatal to Po Yang, and told him that I was persuaded they were descended from Becket's assassin, and I hoped from my Lord Dacre too. He carried us to see the famous plantations and buildings of the last Lord Petre. They are the Brobdingnag of bad taste. The unfinished house is execrable, massive, and split through and through: it stands on the brow of a hill, rather to see *for* a prospect than to see one, and turns its back upon an outrageous avenue, which is closed with a screen of tall trees, because he would not be at the expense of beautifying the back front of his house. The clumps are gigantic, and very ill placed.

George Montagu and the Colonel have at last been here, and have screamed with approbation through the whole *Cu-gamut*.³ Indeed, the library is delightful. They went to the Vine, and approved as much. Do you think we wished for you

² The Committee of Taste, formed by Walpole to remodel Strawberry Hill.

³ Mr. George Montagu, who used many odd expressions, called his own family, the Montagu's, the *Cu's*.—WALPOLE.

you? I carried down incense and mass-books, and we had most Catholic enjoyment of the chapel. In the evenings, indeed, we did *touch a card*⁴ a little to please George—so much, that truly I have scarce an idea left that is not spotted with clubs, hearts, spades, and diamonds. There is a vote of the Strawberry Committee for great embellishments to the chapel, of which it will not be long before you hear something. It will not be longer than the spring, I trust, before you see something of it. In the mean time, to rest your impatience, I have enclosed a scratch of mine, which you are to draw out better, and try if you can give yourself a perfect idea of the place. All I can say is, that my sketch is at least more intelligible than Gray's was of Stoke,⁵ from which you made so like a picture.

Thank you much for the box of Guernsey lilies, which I have received. I have been packing up a few seeds, which have little merit but the merit they will have with you, that they come from the Vine and Strawberry. My chief employ in this part of the world, except surveying my library, which has scarce anything but the painting to finish, is planting at Mrs. Clive's,¹ whither I remove all my superabundancies. I have lately planted the green lane, that leads from her garden to the common: 'Well,' said she, 'when it is done, what shall we call it?' 'Why,' said I, 'what would you call it but Drury Lane

⁴ An expression of Mr. Montagu's.—WALPOLE.

⁵ A sketch of Stoke Manor House, from which Bentley made his design in illustration of *The Long Story*.—T.

¹ Little Strawberry Hill.

Lane?' I mentioned desiring some samples of your Swiss's² abilities: Mr. Chute and I even propose, if he should be tolerable, and would continue reasonable, to tempt him over hither, and make him work upon your designs—upon which, you know, it is not easy to make you work. If he improves upon our hands, do you think we shall purchase the fee-simple of him for so many years, as Mr. Smith did of Canaletti?³ We will sell to the English. Can he paint perspectives, and cathedral-aisles, and holy glooms? I am sure you could make him paint delightful insides of the chapel at the Vine and of the library here. I never come up the stairs without reflecting how different it is from its primitive state, when my Lady Townshend, all the way she came up the stairs, cried out, 'Lord God! Jesus! what a house! It is much such a house as a parson's, where the children lie at the feet of the bed!' I can't say that to-day it puts me much in mind of another speech of my lady's, 'That it would be a very pleasant place, if Mrs. Clive's face did not rise upon it and make it so hot!' The sun and Mrs. Clive seem gone for the winter.

The West Indian war has thrown me into a new study: I read nothing but American voyages, and histories of plantations and settlements. Among all the Indian nations, I have contracted a particular intimacy with the Ontaouanoucs, a people with whom I beg you will be acquainted: they pique themselves upon speaking the purest dialect. How one should
delight

² Mr. Muntz, a Swiss painter.—WALPOLE. He did prove tolerable and did do the work suggested, but he did not continue reasonable, and was dismissed.

³ Mr. Smith, the English Consul at Venice, had engaged Canaletti, for a certain number of years, to paint exclusively for him at a fixed price, and sold his pictures at an advanced price to English travellers.—BERRY.

delight in the grammar and dictionary of their Crusca! My only fear is, that if any of them are taken prisoners, General Braddock is not a kind of man to have proper attentions to so polite a people; I am even apprehensive that he would damn them, and order them to be scalped, in the very worst plantation-accent. I don't know whether you know that none of the people of that immense continent have any labials: they tell you *que c'est ridicule* to shut the lips in order to speak. Indeed, I was as barbarous as any polite nation in the world, in supposing that there was nothing worth knowing among these charming savages. They are in particular great orators, with this little variation from British eloquence, that at the end of every important paragraph, they make a present; whereas we expect to receive one. They begin all their answers with recapitulating what has been said to them; and their method for this is, the respondent gives a little stick to each of the bystanders, who is, for his share, to remember such a paragraph of the speech that is to be answered. You will wonder that I should have given the preference to the Ontaouanoucs, when there is a much more extraordinary nation to the north of Canada, who have but one leg, and p—— from behind their ear; but I own I had rather converse for any time with people who speak like Mr. Pitt, than with a nation of jugglers, who are only fit to go about the country, under the direction of Taafe and Montagu.⁴ Their existence I do not doubt; they are recorded by Père Charlevoix, in his much-admired history
of

⁴ Two English gentlemen who were shut up in Fort l'Evêque for cheating a Jew.
—WALPOLE.

of New France, in which there are such outrageous legends of miracles for the propagation of the Gospel, that his fables in natural history seem strict veracity.

Adieu! You write to me as seldom as if you were in an island where the Duke of Newcastle was sole minister, parties at an end, and where everything had done happening.

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

P. S. I have just seen in the advertisements that there are arrived two new volumes of Madame de Sévigné's *Letters*. Adieu, my American studies;—adieu, even my favourite Ontaouanoucs!

25. To Richard Bentley

[Ætæt 37]

Arlington Street

Feb. 23, 1755

My dear Sir—Your *Argosie* is arrived safe; thank you for shells, trees, cones; but above all, thank you for the landscape. As it is your first attempt in oils, and has succeeded so much beyond my expectation (and being against my advice too, you may believe the sincerity of my praises) I must indulge my Vasarihood, and write a dissertation upon it. You have united and mellowed your colours, in a manner to make it look like an old picture; yet there is something in the tone of it that is not quite right. Mr. Chute thinks that you should have exerted more of your force in tipping with light the edges on which the sun breaks; my own opinion is, that the result of the whole

is

is not natural, by your having joined a Claude Lorrain summer sky to a wintry sea, which you have drawn from the life. The water breaks finely, but the distant hills are too strong, and the outlines much too hard. The greatest fault is the trees (not apt to be your stumbling-block): they are not of a natural green, have no particular resemblance, and are out of all proportion too large for the figures. Mend these errors, and work away in oil. I am impatient to see some Gothic ruins of your painting. This leads me naturally to thank you for the sweet little *cul-de-lampe* to the *Entail*: it is equal to anything you have done in perspective and for taste; but the boy is too large.

For the block of granite I shall certainly think a louis well bestowed—provided I do but get the block, and that you are sure it will be equal to the sample you sent me. My room remains in want of a table; and as it will take so much time to polish it, I do wish you would be a little expeditious in sending it.

I have but frippery news to tell you; no politics; for the rudiments of a war, that is not to be a war, are not worth detailing. In short, we have acted with spirit, have got ready thirty ships of the line, and conclude that the French will not care to examine whether they are well manned or not. The House of Commons *bears* nothing but elections; the Oxfordshire till seven at night three times a week: we have passed ten evenings on the Colchester election, and last Monday sat upon it till near two in the morning. Whoever stands a contested election, and pays for his seat, and attends the first session, surely buys the other six very dear!

The

The great event is the catastrophe of Sir John Bland, who has *flirted* away his whole fortune at hazard. He t'other night exceeded what was lost by the late Duke of Bedford, having at one period of the night (though he recovered the greatest part of it) lost two-and-thirty thousand pounds. The citizens put on their double-channeled pumps and trudge to St. James's Street, in expectation of seeing judgements executed on White's—angels with flaming swords, and devils flying away with dice-boxes, like the prints in Sadeler's Hermits. Sir John lost this immense sum to a Captain Scott, who at present has nothing but a few debts and his commission.

Garrick has produced a detestable English opera, which is crowded by all true lovers of their country. To mark the opposition to Italian operas, it is sung by some cast singers, two Italians and a French girl, and the chapel boys; and to regale us with sense, it is Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, which is forty times more nonsensical than the worst translation of any Italian opera-books.—But such sense and such harmony are irresistible!

I am at present confined with a cold, which I caught by going to a fire in the middle of the night, and in the middle of the snow, two days ago. About five in the morning Harry waked me with a candle in his hand, and cried, 'Pray, your honour, don't be frightened!'—'No, Harry, I am not: but what is it that I am not to be frightened at?'—'There is a great fire here in St. James's Street.'—I rose, and indeed thought all St. James's Street was on fire, but it proved in Bury Street. However, you know I can't resist going to a fire; for it is
certainly

certainly the only horrid sight that is fine. I slipped on my slippers, and an embroidered suit that hung on the chair, and ran to Bury Street, and stepped into a pipe that was broken up for water.—It would have made a picture—the horror of the flames, the snow, the day breaking with difficulty through so foul a night, and my figure, party per *pale*, mud and gold. It put me in mind of Lady Margaret Herbert's providence, who asked somebody for a *pretty* pattern for a nightcap. 'Lord!' said they, 'what signifies the pattern of a nightcap?'—'Oh! child,' said she, 'but you know, in case of fire.' There were two houses burnt, and a poor maid; an officer jumped out of window, and is much hurt, and two young beauties were conveyed out the same way in their shifts. There have been two more great fires. Alderman Belchier's house at Epsom, that belonged to the Prince, is burnt, and Beckford's fine house in the country, with pictures and furniture to a great value. He says, 'Oh! I have an odd fifty thousand pounds in a drawer: I will build it up again: it won't be above a thousand pounds apiece difference to my thirty children.' Adieu!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

26. To Richard Bentley

[Aetat 37]

Strawberry Hill

August 15, 1755

My dear Sir,—Though I wrote to you so lately, and have certainly nothing new to tell you, I can't help scribbling a line
to

to you to-night, as I am going to Mr. Rigby's for a week or ten days, and must thank you first for the three pictures. One of them charms me, the Mount Orgueil, which is absolutely fine; the sea, and shadows upon it, are masterly. The other two I don't, at least won't, take for finished. If you please, Elizabeth Castle shall be Mr. Muntz's performance: indeed I see nothing of you in it. I do reconnoitre you in the Hercules and Nessus; but in both, your colours are dirty, carelessly dirty: in your distant hills you are improved, and not hard. The figures are too large—I don't mean in the Elizabeth Castle, for there they are neat; but the centaur, though he dies as well as Garrick can, is outrageous. Hercules and Deianira are by no means so: he is sentimental, and she most improperly sorrowful. However, I am pleased enough to beg you would continue. As soon as Mr. Muntz returns from the Vine, you shall have a supply of colours. In the mean time why give up the good old trade of drawing? Have you no Indian ink, no soot-water, no snuff, no coat of onion, no juice of anything? If you love me draw: you would if you knew the real pleasure you can give me. I have been studying all your drawings; and next to architecture and trees, I determine that you succeed in nothing better than animals. Now (as the newspapers say) the late ingenious Mr. Seymour is dead, I would recommend horses and greyhounds to you. I should think you capable of a landscape or two with delicious bits of architecture. I have known you execute the light of a torch or lanthorn so well, that if it was called Schalken, a housekeeper at Hampton Court or Windsor

Windsor, or a Catherine at Strawberry Hill, would show it, and say it cost ten thousand pounds. Nay, if I could believe that you would ever execute any more designs I proposed to you, I would give you a hint for a picture that struck me t'other day in Péréfixe's *Life of Henry IV.* He says, the king was often seen lying upon a common straw-bed among the soldiers with a piece of brown bread in one hand, and a bit of charcoal in t'other, to draw an encampment, or town that he was besieging. If this is not character and a picture, I don't know what is.

I dined to-day at Garrick's: there were the Duke of Grafton, Lord and Lady Rochford, Lady Holderness, the crooked Mostyn, and Dabreu the Spanish minister; two regents, of which one is Lord Chamberlain, the other Groom of the Stole; and the wife of a Secretary of State. This is being *sur un assez bon ton* for a player! Don't you want to ask me how I like him? Do want, and I will tell you.—I like her exceedingly; her behaviour is all sense, and all sweetness too.¹ I don't know how, he does not improve so fast upon me: but there is a great deal too of mimicry and burlesque. I am very ungrateful, for he flatters me abundantly; but unluckily I know it. I was accustomed to it enough when my father was first minister: on his fall I lost it all at once: and since that I have lived with Mr. Chute, who is all vehemence; with Mr. Fox, who is all disputation; with Sir Charles Williamson who has no time from flattering himself; with Gray, who does not hate to find
fault

¹ The 'Violetta' (1724-1822). The reputed daughter of a Viennese citizen; m. (1749) David Garrick.—T.

fault with me; ² with Mr. Conway, who is all sincerity; and with you and Mr. Rigby, who have always laughed at me in a good-natured way. I don't know how, but I think I like all this as well—I beg his pardon, Mr. Raftor ³ does flatter me; but I should be a cormorant for praise, if I could swallow it whole as he gives it me.

Sir William Yonge, who has been extinct so long, is at last dead; and the war, which began with such a flirt of vivacity, is I think gone to sleep. General Braddock has not yet sent over to claim the surname of Americanus. But why should I take pains to show you in how many ways, I know nothing?—Why; I can tell it you in one word—why Mr. Cambridge ⁴ knows nothing!—I wish you good night!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

27. *To Richard Bentley*

[*Aetat 38*]

Arlington Street

Nov. 16, 1755

Never was poor invulnerable immortality so soon brought to shame! Alack! I have had the gout! I would fain have persuaded myself that it was a sprain; and, then, that it was only the gout come to look for Mr. Chute at Strawberry Hill: but none of my evasions will do! I was, certainly, lame for

two

² Writing to Montagu, September 3, 1748, Walpole said: 'I agree with you most absolutely in your opinion about Gray: he is the worst company in the world—from a melancholy turn, from living reclusely, and from a little too much dignity, he never converses easily—all his words are measured and chosen, and formed into sentences; his writings are admirable; he himself is not agreeable.'

³ Brother of Mrs. Clive.—T.

⁴ Richard Owen Cambridge (1717-1802). A contributor to the *World* and writer of light verse. He was a notorious gossip and news-monger.

two days; and though I repelled it—first, by getting wet-shod, and then by spirits of camphire; and though I have since tamed it more rationally by leaving off the little wine I drank, I still know where to look for it whenever I have an occasion for a political illness.—Come, my constitution is not very much broken, when, in four days after such a mortifying attack, I could sit in the House of Commons, full as possible, from two at noon till past five in the morning, as we did but last Thursday. The new opposition attacked the Address.—Who are the new opposition?—Why, the old opposition: Pitt and the Grenvilles; indeed, with Legge instead of Sir George Lyttelton. Judge how entertaining it was to me to hear Lyttelton answer Grenville, and Pitt Lyttelton! The debate, long and uninterrupted as it was, was a great deal of it extremely fine: the numbers did not answer to the merit: the new friends, the Duke of Newcastle and Mr. Fox, had 311 to 105. The *bon mot* in fashion is, that the staff was very good, but they wanted private men. Pitt surpassed himself, and then I need not tell you that he surpassed Cicero and Demosthenes. What a figure would they, with their formal, laboured, cabinet orations, make *vis-a-vis* his manly vivacity and dashing eloquence at one o'clock in the morning, after sitting in that heat for eleven hours! He spoke above an hour and a half, with scarce a bad sentence: the most admired part was a comparison he drew of the two parts of the new administration, to the conflux of the Rhône and the Saône; 'the latter a gentle, feeble, languid stream, languid but not deep; the other a boisterous and overbearing torrent; but they join at last; and long may they continue united, to the comfort

comfort of each other, and to the glory, honour, and happiness of this nation!’ I hope you are not mean-spirited enough to dread an invasion, when the senatorial contests are reviving in the temple of Concord.—*But will it make a party?* Yes, truly; I never saw so promising a prospect. Would not it be cruel, at such a period to be laid up?

I have only had a note from you to promise me a letter; but it is not arrived:—but the partridges are, and well; and I thank you.

England seems *returning*: for those who are not in Parliament, there are nightly riots at Drury Lane, where there is an anti-Gallican party against some French dancers. The young men of quality have protected them till last night, when, being Opera night, the galleries were victorious.

Montagu writes me many kind things for you: he is in Cheshire, but comes to town this winter. Adieu! I have so much to say, that I have time to say but very little.

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

P.S. George Selwyn hearing much talk of a sea-war or a continent, said, ‘I am for a sea-war and a *continent* admiral.’

28. *To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway*

[Ætæt 38]

Arlington Street

Feb. 12, 1756

I will not write to my Lady Ailesbury to-night, nor pretend to answer the prettiest letter in the world, when I am out of spirits

spirits. I am very unhappy about poor Mr. Mann,¹ who I fear is in a deep consumption: the doctors do not give him over, and the symptoms are certainly a little mended this week; but you know how fallacious that distemper is, and how unwise it would be to trust to it! As he is at Richmond, I pass a great deal of my time out of town to be near him, and so may have missed some news; but I will tell you all I know.

The House of Commons is dwindled into a very dialogue between Pitt and Fox—one even begins to want Admiral Vernon again for variety. Sometimes it is a little *piquant*; in which though Pitt has attacked, Fox has generally had the better. These three or four last days we have been solely upon the Pennsylvanian regiment,² bickering, and but once dividing, 165 to 57. We are got but past the first reading yet. We want the French to put a little vivacity into us. The Duke of Newcastle has expected them every hour: he was terribly alarmed t'other night; on his table he found a mysterious card with only these words, *Charles is very well, and is expected in England every day*. It was plainly some friend that advertised him of the Pretender's approaching arrival. He called up all the servants, ransacked the whole house, to know who had been in his dressing-room:—at last it came out to be an answer from the Duchess of Queensberry to the Duchess of Newcastle about Lord Charles Douglas. Don't it put you in mind of my Lord Treasurer Portland in Clarendon, *Remember Cesar!*

The French have promised letters of *noblesse* to whoever fits
out

¹ Galfridus Mann, brother of Horace. He died shortly after this.

² A plan for raising four battalions of Swiss and German settlers to serve in North America.—T.

out even a little privateer. I could not help a melancholy smile when my Lady Ailesbury talked of coming over soon. I fear major-general *you* will scarce be permitted to return to your plough at Park Place, when we grudge every man that is left at the plough. Between the French and the earthquakes,³ you have no notion how good we are grown; nobody makes a suit of clothes now but of sackcloth turned up with ashes. The fast was kept so devoutly, that Dick Edgcombe, finding a very lean hazard at White's, said with a sigh, 'Lord, how the times are degenerated! Formerly a fast would have brought everybody hither; now it keeps everybody away!' A few nights before, two men walking up the Strand, one said to t'other, 'Look how red the sky is! Well, thank God! there is to be no masquerade!'

My Lord Ashburnham does not keep a fast; he is going to marry one of the plump Crawleys:—they call him the noble lord upon the woolsack.

The Duchess of Norfolk opened her new house: all the earth was there last Tuesday. You would have thought there had been a comet, everybody was gaping in the air and treading on one another's toes. In short, you never saw such a scene of magnificence and taste. The tapestry, the embroidered bed, the illumination, the glasses, the lightness and novelty of the ornaments, and the ceilings, are delightful. She gives three Tuesdays, would you could be at one! Somebody asked my Lord Rockingham afterwards at White's what was there? He said

³ The dreadful earthquake which had taken place at Lisbon towards the end of the preceding year.—WALPOLE.

said, 'Oh! there was all the company afraid of the Duchess, and the Duke afraid of all the company.'—It was not a bad picture.

My Lady Ailesbury flatters me extremely about my *World*, but it has brought me into a peck of troubles. In short, the good-natured town have been pleased to lend me a meaning, and call my Lord Bute¹ Sir Eustace.² I need not say how ill the story tallies to what they apply it, but I do vow to you, that so far from once entering into my imagination, my only apprehension was, that I should be suspected of flattery for the compliment to the Princess in a former part. It is the more cruel, because you know it is just the thing in the world on which one must not defend one's self. If I might, I can prove that the paper was writ last Easter, long before this history was ever mentioned, and flung by, because I did not like it; I mentioned it one night to my Lady Hervey, which was the occasion of its being printed.

I beg you will tell my Lady Ailesbury, that I am sorry she could not discover any *wit* in Mrs. Hussey's making a septleva. I knew I never was so vain of any wit in my life as in winning a thousand leva and two five hundred levas.

You would laugh if you saw in the midst of what trumpery I am writing. Two porters have just brought home my purchases from Mrs. Kennon the mid-wife's sale: Brobdingnag combs, old broken pots, pans, and pipkins, a lantern of scraped oyster-shells, scimitars, Turkish pipes, Chinese baskets, etc., etc.

¹ The Prime Minister.

² Sir Eustace Drawbridgecourt. See *World*. No. 160, 5th vol.—WALPOLE. The real name of Walpole's hero was D'Abrichecourt.—T.

etc. My servants think my head is turned: I hope not: it is all to be called the personal estate and movables of my great-great-grandmother, and to be deposited at Strawberry. I believe you think my letter as strange a miscellany as my purchases.

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

P. S. I forgot that I was outbid for Oliver Cromwell's nightcap.

29. To George Montagu

[Ætæt 39]

Strawberry Hill

Oct. 14, 1756

I shall certainly not bid for the chariot for you; do you estimate an old dowager's new machine but at ten pounds? You could scarce have valued herself at less! it is appraised here at fifty. There are no family pictures but such as you might buy at any perpe[tu]al sale, that is, there are three portraits without names. If you had offered ten pounds for a set of *Pelhams*,¹ perhaps I should not have thought you had underprized them.

You bid me give you some account of myself; I can in very few words: I am quite alone; in the morning I view a new pond I am making for gold-fish, and stick in a few shrubs or trees, wherever I can find a space, which is very rare: in the evening I scribble a little; all this mixed with reading, that

is

¹ The great Tory family.

is, I can't say I read much, but I pick up a good deal of reading. The only thing I have done that can compose a paragraph, and which I think you are Whig enough to forgive me, is, that on each side of my bed I have hung the *Magna Charta*, and the Warrant for King Charles's execution, on which I have written *Major Charta*; as I believe, without the latter, the former by this time would be of very little importance. You will ask where Mr. Bentley is; confined with five sick infantas, who live in spite of the epidemic distemper, and as if they were infantas, and in bed himself with a fever and the same sore throat, though he sends me word he mends.

The King of Prussia has sent us over a victory;² which is very kind, as we are not likely to get any of our own—not even by the secret expedition, which you apprehend, and which I believe still less than I did the invasion.—Perhaps indeed there may be another port on the coast of France which we hope to discover, as we did one in the last war. By degrees, and somehow or other, I believe, we shall be fully acquainted with France. I saw the German letter you mention, think it very mischievous, and very well written for the purpose.

You talk of being better than you have been for many months; pray, which months were they, and what was the matter with you? Don't send me your fancies; I shall neither pity nor comfort you. You are perfectly well, and always was ever since I knew you, which is now—I won't say how long, but

² At Lobositz in Bohemia, where, on Oct. 1, 1756, Frederick defeated the Austrians under Marshal Brown.—T.

but within this century. Thank God you have good health, and don't call it names.

John and I are just going to Garrick's, with a grove of cypresses in our hands, like the Kentish men at the Conquest. He has built a temple to his master Shakespear, and I am going to adorn the outside, since his modesty would not let me decorate it within, as I proposed, with these mottoes:

Quod spiro et placeo, si placeo, tuum est.
That I spirit have and nature,
That sense breathes in ev'ry feature,
That I please, if please I do,
Shakespear, all I owe to you.

Adieu!

Yours ever,

H. W.

30. *To John Chute*

[Ætat 39]

Strawberry Hill

July 12, 1757

It would be very easy to persuade me to a *Vine-voyage*,¹ without your being so indebted to me, if it were possible. I shall represent my impediments, and then you shall judge. I say nothing of the heat of this magnificent weather, with the glass yesterday up to three-quarters of sultry. In all English probability this will not be a hindrance long: though at present

¹ To visiting Mr. Chute at the Vine, his seat in Hampshire.—WALPOLE.

present, so far from travelling, I have made the tour of my own garden but once these three days before eight at night, and then I thought I should have died of it. For how many years we shall have to talk of the summer of fifty-seven!—But hear: my Lady Ailesbury and Miss Rich come hither on Thursday for two or three days: and on Monday next the *Officina Arbuteana*² opens in form. The Stationers' Company, that is, Mr. Dodsley, Mr. Tonson,³ &c. are summoned to meet here on Sunday night. And with what do you think we open? *Cedite, Romani Impressores*—with nothing under *Gravi Carmina*.⁴ I found him in town last week: he had brought his two Odes to be printed. I snatched them out of Dodsley's hands, and they are to be the first-fruits of my press. An edition of Hentznerus,⁵ with a version by Mr. Bentley and a little preface of mine, were prepared, but are to wait.—Now, my dear Sir, can I stir?

Not ev'n thy virtues, tyrant, shall avail!⁶

Is not it the plainest thing in the world that I cannot go to you yet, but that you must come to me?

I tell you no news, for I know none, think of none. Elzevir, Aldus, and Stephens are the freshest personages in my memory. Unless I was appointed printer of the *Gazette*, I think nothing could

² The Strawberry Hill Press.—T.

³ Jacob Tonson (d. 1767), who carried on the publishing business founded by his great-uncle.—T.

⁴ Gray's odes, *The Progress of Poesy* and *The Bard*, published under the title *Odes by Mr. Gray*, in August, 1757.

⁵ The *Journey into England* of Paul Hentzner (1558-1623), of which two hundred and twenty copies were printed. It was published in October, 1757.—T.

⁶ Line 6 of *The Bard*, not yet published.—T.

could at present make me read an article in it. Seriously, you must come to us and shall be witness that the first holidays we have I will return with you. Adieu!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

31. To Sir Horace Mann

[*Aetat 39*]

Strawberry Hill

Aug. 4, 1757

Mr. Phelps (who is Mr. Phelps?) has brought me the packet safe, for which I thank you. I would fain have persuaded him to stay and dine, that I might ask him more questions about you. He told me how low your ministerial spirits are: I fear the news that came last night will not exalt them. The French attacked the Duke for three days together, and at last defeated him. I find it is called at Kensington an encounter¹ of fourteen squadrons; but any defeat must be fatal to Hanover. I know few particulars, and those only by a messenger dispatched to me by Mr. Conway on the first tidings; the Duke exposed himself extremely, but is unhurt, as they say all his small family are. In what a situation is our Prussian hero, surrounded by Austrians, French, and Muscovites—even impertinent Sweden is stealing in to pull a feather out of his tail! What devout plunderers will every little Catholic prince of the empire become! The only good I hope to extract out of this mischief is, that it will stifle our secret expedition, and preserve

Mr.

¹ The battle of Hastenbeck.—WALPOLE.

Mr. Conway from going on it. I have so ill an opinion of our secret expeditions, that I hope they will for ever remain so. What a melancholy picture is there of an old monarch at Kensington, who has lived to see such inglorious and fatal days! Admiral Boscawen is disgraced. I know not the cause exactly, as ten miles out of town are a thousand out of politics. He is said to have refused to serve under Sir Edward Hawke in this armament. Shall I tell you what, more than distance, has thrown me out of attention to news? A little packet which I shall give your brother for you will explain it. In short, I am turned printer, and have converted a little cottage here into a printing-office. My abbey is a perfect college or academy. I keep a painter in the house, and a printer—not to mention Mr. Bentley, who is an academy himself. I send you two copies (one for Dr. Cocchi) of a very honourable opening of my press—two amazing Odes of Mr. Gray; they are Greek, they are Pindaric, they are sublime! consequently I fear a little obscure; the second particularly, by the confinement of the measure and the nature of prophetic vision, is mysterious. I could not persuade him to add more notes; he says whatever wants to be explained, don't deserve to be. I shall venture to place some in Dr. Cocchi's copy, who need not be supposed to understand Greek and English together, though he is so much master of both separately. To divert you in the meantime, I send you the following copy of a letter written by my printer¹

to

¹ William Robinson, first printer to the press at Strawberry Hill.—WALPOLE. Eighteen months later Walpole wrote Zouch, 'My printer, who was a foolish Irishman, and who took himself for a genius, and who grew angry when I thought him extremely the former, and not the least of the latter, has left me.'

to a friend in Ireland. I should tell you that he has the most sensible look in the world; Garrick said he would give any money for four actors with such eyes—they are more Richard the Third's than Garrick's own; but whatever his eyes are, his head is Irish. Looking for something I wanted in a drawer, I perceived a parcel of strange romantic words in a large hand beginning a letter; he saw me see it, yet left it, which convinces me it was left on purpose: it is the grossest flattery to me, couched in most ridiculous scraps of poetry, which he has retained from things he has printed: but it will best describe itself:—

Sir,—I date this from shady bowers, nodding groves, and amaranthine shades—close by old Father Thames's silver side—fair Twickenham's luxurious shades—Richmond's near neighbour, where great George the King resides. You will wonder at my prolixity—in my last I informed you that I was going into the country to transact business for a private gentleman.—This gentleman is the Hon. Horatio Walpole, son to the late great Sir Robert Walpole, who is very studious, and an admirer of all the liberal arts and sciences; amongst the rest he admires printing. He has fitted out a complete printing-house at this his country seat, and has done me the favour to make me sole manager and operator (there being no one but myself). All men of genius resorts his house, courts his company, and admires his understanding—what with his own and their writings, I believe I shall be pretty well employed. I have pleased him, and I hope to continue so to do. Nothing can be more warm than the weather has been here this time
past

past; they have in London, by the help of glasses, roasted in the Artillery Ground fowls and quarters of lamb. The coolest days that I have felt since May last, are equal to, nay, far exceed the warmest I ever felt in Ireland. The place I am in now is all my comfort from the heat—the situation of it is close to the Thames, and is Richmond Gardens (if you were ever in them) in miniature, surrounded by bowers, groves, cascades, and ponds, and on a rising ground, not very common in this part of the country—the building elegant, and the furniture of a peculiar taste, magnificent and superb. He is a bachelor, and spends his time in the studious rural taste—not like his father, tost in the weather-beaten vessel of state—many people censured, but his conduct was far better than our late pilot's at the helm, and more to the interest of England—they follow his advice now, and court the assistance of Spain, instead of provoking a war, for that was ever against England's interest.

I laughed for an hour at this picture of myself, which is much more like to the studious magician in the enchanted opera of Rinaldo: not but Twickenham has a romantic genteelness that would figure in a more luxurious climate. It was but yesterday that we had a new kind of auction—it was of the orange-trees and plants of your old acquaintance, Admiral Martin. It was one of the warm days of this jubilee summer, which appears only once in fifty years—the plants were disposed in little clumps about the lawn; the company walked to bid from one to the other, and the auctioneer knocked down the lots on the orange tubs. Within three doors was an auction of China. You did not imagine that we were such a metropolis! Adieu!

32. To George Montagu

[Ætæt 39]

Strawberry Hill

Aug. 25, 1757

I did not know that you expected the pleasure of seeing the Colonel so soon. It is plain that *I* did *not* solicit leave of absence for him; make him my many compliments. I should have been happy to have seen you and Mr. John, but must not regret it, as you was so agreeably prevented. You are very particular, I can tell you, in liking Gray's *Odes*—but you must remember that the age likes Akinside, and did like Thomson! Can the same people like both? Milton was forced to wait till the world had done admiring Quarles. Cambridge told me t'other night that my Lord Chesterfield had heard Stanley read them as his own, but that must have been a mistake of my Lord's deafness. Cambridge said, 'Perhaps they are Stanley's; and not caring to own them, he gave them to Gray.' I think this would hurt Gray's dignity ten times more than his poetry not succeeding. My humble share as his printer has been more favourably received. We proceed soberly. I must give you some account of *les amusements des eaux de Straberri*. T'other day my Lady Rochford, Lady Townshend, Miss Bland, and the new Knight of the Garter¹ dined here, and were carried into the printing-office, and were to see the man print. There were some lines ready placed, which he took off; I gave them to My Lady Townshend; here they are—
The

¹ Lord Waldegrave.—T.

The press speaks:

From me wits and poets their glory obtain;
Without me their wit and their verses were vain.
Stop, Townshend, and let me but *print* what you say;
You, the fame I on others bestow, will repay.

They then asked, as I foresaw, to see the man compose; I gave him four lines out of *The Fair Penitent*, which he set, but while he went to place them in the press, I made them look at something else, without their observing, and in an instant he whipped away what he had just set, and to their great surprise, when they expected to see *Were ye, ye fair*, he presented to my Lady Rochford the following lines:—

The press speaks:

In vain from your properest name you have flown,
And exchang'd lovely Cupid's for Hymen's dull throne;
By my art shall your beauties be constantly sung,
And in spite of yourself you shall ever be YOUNG.¹

You may imagine, whatever the poetry was, that the galantry of it succeeded.

Poor Mr. Bentley has been at the extremity with a fever, and inflammation in his bowels; but is so well recovered that Mr. Muntz is gone to fetch him hither to-day.

I don't guess what sight I have to come in Hampshire, unless it is Abbotstone. I am pretty sure I have none to come at the Vine, where I have done advising, as I see Mr. Chute will never execute anything. The very altar-piece that I sent
for

¹ Lady Rochford was a Miss Young.—T.

for to Italy is not placed yet. But when he could refrain from making the Gothic columbarium for his family, which I proposed, and Mr. Bentley had drawn so divinely, it is not probable he should do anything else. Adieu!

Yours ever,

H. WALPOLE.

33. *To George Montagu*

[*Aetat 41*]

Arlington Street

Oct. 24, 1758

I am a little sorry that my preface, like the show-cloth to a sight, entertained you more than the *bears* that it invited you in to see. I don't mean that I am not glad to have written anything that meets your approbation, but if Lord Whitworth's ¹ work is not better than my preface, I fear he has much less merit than I thought he had.

Your complaint of your eyes makes me feel for you: mine have been very weak again, and I am taking the bark, which did them so much service last year. I don't know how to give up the employment of them, I mean reading—for as to writing, I am absolutely winding up my bottom, for twenty reasons. The first, and perhaps the best, I have writ enough.—The next; by what I have writ, the world thinks I am not a fool, which was just what I wished them to think, having always lived in terror of that oracular saying, *Ηρώων παιδες λωβοι*,
which

¹ Charles Whitworth (1675-1725), first Baron Whitworth, sometime Minister at Vienna and Berlin.—T. Walpole published his *Account of Russia* at Strawberry Hill.

which Mr. Bentley translated with so much more parts than the vain and malicious *hero* could have done that set him the task, I mean his father, ‘the sons of heroes are loobies.’ My last reason is, I find my little stock of reputation very troublesome, both to maintain and to undergo the consequences—it has dipped me in *erudite* correspondences—I receive letters every week that compliment my learning—now, as there is nothing I hold so cheap as a learned man, except an unlearned one, this title is insupportable to me; if I have not a care, I shall be called learned, till somebody abuses me for *not* being learned, as they, not I, fancied I was. In short, I propose to have nothing more to do with the world, but divert myself in it as an obscure passenger—pleasure, virtù, politics and literature, I have tried them all, and have had enough of them.—Content and tranquillity, with now and then a little of three of them, that I may not grow morose, shall satisfy the rest of a life that is to have much idleness, and I hope a little goodness—for politics—a long adieu! With some of the Cardinal de Retz’s¹ experience, though with none of his genius, I see the folly of taking a violent part without any view (I don’t mean to commend a violent part *with* a view, that is still worse). I leave the state to be scrambled for by Mazarine,² at once cowardly and enterprising, ostentatious, jealous, and false; by Louvois,³ rash and dark; by Colbert,⁴ the affector of national interest, with designs not much better; and

¹ Jean François Paul de Gondi (1614-1679), Cardinal de Retz, prominent in the war of the *Fronde*.—T.

² The Duke of Newcastle.—T.

³ Henry Fox.—T.

⁴ Pitt.—T.

and I leave the Abbé de la Rigbiere⁵ to sell the weak Duke of Orleans⁶ to whoever has money to buy him, or would buy him to get money—at least these are my present reflections—if I should change them to-morrow, remember I am not only a human creature, but that I am I, that is, one of the weakest of human creatures; and so sensible of my fickleness that I am sometimes inclined to keep a diary of my mind, as people do of the weather.—Today you see it temperate—to-morrow it may again blow politics and be stormy—for while I have so much quicksilver left, I fear my passionometer will be susceptible of sudden changes. What do years give one? Experience. Experience, what? Reflections. Reflections, what?—nothing that I ever could find—nor can I well agree with Waller, that

The soul's dark cottage, batter'd and decay'd,
Lets in new light through chinks that time has made.—

Chinks I am afraid there are, but instead of new light, I find nothing but darkness visible, that serves only to discover sights of woe! I look back through my chinks—I find errors, follies, faults—forwards, old age and death; pleasures fleeting from me, no virtues succeeding to their place—*il faut avouer*, I want all my quicksilver to make such a background receive any other objects!

I am glad Mr. Frederick Montagu⁷ thinks so well of me

as

⁵ Richard Rigby.—T.

⁶ The Duke of Bedford.—T.

⁷ Frederick Montagu (1733-1800), of Papplewick, Nottinghamshire; Lord of the Treasury, 1782, 1783. He was a friend of the poets Gray and Mason.—T.

as to be sure I shall be glad to see him without an invitation. For you, I had already perceived that you would not come to Strawberry this year. Adieu! Remember, nobody is to see this letter, but yourself and the clerks of the post office.

Yours ever,

H. W.

34. *To George Montagu*

[Aetat 41]

June 2, 1759

Strawberry hill is grown a perfect Paphos, it is the land of beauties. On Wednesday the Duchesses of Hamilton and Richmond and Lady Ailesbury dined there; the two latter stayed all night. There never was so pretty a sight as to see them all three sitting in the shell; ¹ a thousand years hence, when I begin to grow old, if that can ever be, I shall talk of that event, and tell young people how much handsomer the women of my time were than they will be then: I shall say, 'Women alter now; I remember Lady Ailesbury looking handsomer than her daughter, the pretty Duchess of Richmond, as they were sitting in the shell on my terrace with the Duchess of Hamilton, one of the famous Gunnings.'—Yesterday the t'other, more famous, Gunning dined there.—She has made a friendship with my charming niece, to disguise her jealousy of the new Countess's beauty—there were they two, their lords, Lord Buckingham, and Charlotte.—You will think that I did
not

¹ 'A large seat in the form of a shell, carved in oak, from a design by Mr. Bentley.' See *Description of Strawberry Hill*, where it is engraved.—T.

not choose men for my parties so well as women.—I don't include Lord Waldegrave in this bad election.

Loo is mounted to its zenith; the parties last till one and two in the morning. We played at Lady Hertford's last week, the last night of her lying-in, till deep into Sunday morning, after she and her lord were retired. It is now adjourned to Mrs. Fitzroy's, whose child the town calls *Pam-ela*. I proposed, that instead of receiving cards for assemblies, one should send in a morning to Dr. Hunter's, the man-midwife, to know where there is loo that evening.

I find poor Charles Montagu is dead—is it true, as the papers say, that his son comes into Parliament?

The invasion is not half so much in fashion as loo; and the King demanding the assistance of the militia does not add much dignity to it. The great Pam of Parliament, who made the motion, entered into a wonderful definition of the several sorts of fear; from *fear that comes from pusillanimity*, up to *fear from magnanimity*. It put me in mind of that wise Pythian, my Lady Londonderry, who, when her sister, Lady Donnegal, was dying, pronounced, that if it was a *fever from a fever*, she would live; but if it was a *fever from death*, she would die.

Mr. Mason has published another drama, called *Caractacus*; there are some incantations poetical enough, and odes so Greek as to have very little meaning. But the whole is laboured, uninteresting, and no more resembling the manners of Britons than of Japanese. It is introduced by a piping elegy; for Mason, in imitation of Gray, *will cry and roar all night* without the least provocation.

Adieu

Adieu! I shall be glad to hear that your Strawberry tide is fixed.

Yours ever,
H. W.

35. *To Sir Horace Mann*

[Aetat 42]
Arlington Street
Dec. 13, 1759

That ever you should pitch upon me for a mechanic or geometric commission! How my own ignorance has laughed at me since I read your letter! I say, *your* letter, for as to Dr. Perelli's, I know no more of a Latin term in mathematics than Mrs. Goldsworthy¹ had an idea of verbs. I will tell you an early anecdote in my own life, and you shall judge. When I first went to Cambridge, I was to learn mathematics of the famous blind professor Sanderson. I had not frequented him a fortnight, before he said to me, 'Young man, it is cheating you to take your money: believe me, you never can learn these things; you have no capacity for them.' I can smile now, but I cried then with mortification. The next step, in order to comfort myself, was not to believe him: I could not conceive that I had not talents for anything in the world. I took, at my own expense, a private instructor, who came to me once a day for a year. Nay, I took infinite pains, but had so little capacity

¹Wife of the English Consul at Leghorn, where, when she was learning Italian by grammar, she said, 'Oh! give me a language in which there are no verbs!' concluding, as she had not learnt her own language by grammar, that there were no verbs in English.—WALPOLE.

capacity, and so little attention (as I have always had to anything that did not immediately strike my inclinations), that after mastering any proposition, when the man came the next day, it was as new to me as if I had never heard of it; in short, even to common figures, I am the dullest dunce alive. I have often said it of myself, and it is true, that nothing that has not a proper name of a man or a woman to it, affixes any idea upon my mind. I could remember who was King Ethelbald's great-aunt, and not be sure whether she lived in the year 500 or 1500. I don't know whether I ever told you, that when you sent me the seven gallons of drams, and they were carried to Mr. Fox by mistake for Florence wine, I pressed him to keep as much as he liked; for, said I, I have seen the bill of lading, and there is a vast quantity. He asked how much? I answered seventy gallons; so little idea I have of quantity. I will tell you one more story of myself, and you will comprehend what sort of a head I have! Mrs. Leneve² said to me one day, 'There is a vast waste of coals in your house; you should make the servants take off the fires at night.' I recollected this as I was going to bed, and, out of *economy*, put my fire out with a bottle of Bristol water! However, as I certainly will neglect nothing to oblige you, I went to Sisson, and gave him the letter. He has undertaken both the engine and the drawing, and has promised the utmost care in both. The latter, he says, must be very large, and that it will take some time to have it performed

² Mrs. Isabella Leneve, a gentlewoman of a very ancient family in Norfolk, who had been brought up by Lady Anne Walpole, aunt of Sir Robert Walpole, with his sister, Lady Townshend, and afterwards had the care of Sir Robert's daughter, Lady Maria, after whose marriage with Mr. Churchill she lived with Mr. Walpole to her death. She had an excellent understanding, and a great deal of wit.—WALPOLE.

performed very accurately. He has promised me both in six or seven weeks. But another time, don't imagine, because I can bespeak an enamelled bauble, that I am fit to be entrusted with the direction of the machine at Marli. It is not to save myself trouble, for I think nothing so for you, but I would have you have credit, and I should be afraid of dishonouring you.

There! there is the King of Prussia has turned all our war and peace topsy-turvy! If Mr. Pitt will conquer Germany too, he must go and do it himself. Fourteen thousand soldiers and nine generals taken, as it were, in a partridge-net¹ and, what is worse, I have not heard yet that the monarch owns his rashness. You know I have always dreaded Daun—one cannot make a blunder but he profits of it—and this just at the moment that we heard of nothing but new bankruptcy in France. I want to know what a kingdom is to do when it is forced to run away?

14th—Oh! I interrupt my reflections—here is another bit of a victory! Prince Henry, who has already succeeded to his brother's crown, as king of the fashion, has beaten a parcel of Wirtemberghers, and taken four battalions. Daun is gone into Bohemia, and Dresden is still to be ours. The French are gone into winter quarters—thank God! What weather is here to be lying on the ground! Men should be statues, or will be so, if they go through it. Hawke is enjoying himself in Quiberon Bay, but I believe has done no more execution. Dr.
Hay

¹ At Mäzen in Saxony, where, on Nov. 26, General Finck, with between fifteen and twenty thousand men, was forced to surrender to the Austrians under Daun.—T.

Hay says it will soon be as shameful to beat a Frenchman as to beat a woman. Indeed, one is forced to ask every morning what victory there is, for fear of missing one. We talk of a congress at Breda, and some think Lord Temple will go thither: if *he* does, I shall really believe it will be peace; and a good one, as it will then be of Mr. Pitt's making.

I was much pleased that the watch succeeded so triumphantly, and *beat the French* watches, though they were two to one. For the *Fugitive Pieces*¹: the Inscription for the Column² was written when I was with you at Florence, though I don't wonder that you have forgotten it after so many years. I would not have it talked of, for I find some grave personages are offended with the liberties I have taken with so imperial a head.³ What could provoke them to give a column Christian burial? Adieu!

36. *To Lady Hervey*

[Ætæt 42]

Jan. 12, 1760

I am very sorry your Ladyship could doubt a moment on the cause of my concern yesterday. I saw you much displeased at what I had said; and I felt so innocent of the least intention of offending you, that I could not help being struck at my own ill-fortune, and with the sensation raised by finding you mix great goodness with great severity.

I

¹ Printed at Strawberry Hill.

² Inscription on a neglected column at Florence.—WALPOLE.

³ Francis, Emperor of Austria, husband of Maria Theresa. The poem contains a contemptuous reference to him as a 'Lorrainer'.—T.

I am naturally very impatient under praise; I have reflected enough on myself to know I don't deserve it; and with this consciousness you ought to forgive me, Madam, if I dreaded that the person whose esteem I valued the most in the world, should think that I was fond of what I know is not my due. I meant to express this apprehension as respectfully as I could, but my words failed me—a misfortune not too common to me, who am apt to say too much, not too little! Perhaps it is that very quality which your Ladyship calls wit, and I call tinsel, for which I dread being praised. I wish to recommend myself to you by more essential merits—and if I can only make you laugh, it will be very apt to make me as much concerned as I was yesterday. For people to whose approbation I am indifferent, I don't care whether they commend or condemn me for my wit; in the former case they will not make me admire myself for it, in the latter they can't make me think but what I have thought already. But for the few whose friendship I wish, I would fain have them see, that under all the idleness of my spirits there are some very serious qualities, such as warmth, gratitude, and sincerity, which ill returns may render useless or may make me lock up in my breast, but which will remain there while I have a being.

Having drawn you this picture of myself, Madam, a subject I have to say so much upon, will not your good-nature apply it as it deserves, to what passed yesterday? Won't you believe that my concern flowed from being disappointed at having offended one whom I ought by so many ties to try to please,
and

and whom, if I ever meant anything, I had meant to please? I intended you should see how much I despise wit, if I have any, and that you should know my heart was void of vanity and full of gratitude. They are very few I desire should know so much; but my passions act too promptly and too naturally, as you saw, when I am with those I really love, to be capable of any disguise. Forgive me, Madam, this tedious detail; but of all people living I cannot bear that you should have a doubt about me.

37. To George Montagu

[*Aetat 42*]

Arlington Street

Jan. 14, 1760

How do you contrive to exist on your mountain in this rude season? Sure you must be become a snowball! As I was not in England in forty-one, I had no notion of such cold. The streets are abandoned, nothing appears in them; the Thames is almost as solid. Then think what a campaign must be in such a season! Our army was under arms for fourteen hours on the twenty-third, expecting the French; and several of the men were frozen when they should have dismounted. What milksops the Marlboroughs and Turennes, the Blakes and the Van Trumps appear now, who whipped into winter quarters and into port, the moment their noses looked blue. Sir Cloudesly Shovel said that an admiral would deserve to be
broke

broke, who kept great ships out after the end of September, and to be shot if after October.—There's Hawke in the bay weathering *this* winter, after conquering in a storm. For my part, I scarce venture to make a campaign in the Opera House, for if I once begin to freeze, I shall be frozen through in a moment. I am amazed, with such weather, such ravages, and distress, that there is anything left in Germany, but money; for thither half the treasure of Europe goes: England, France, Russia, and all the Empress can squeeze from Italy and Hungary, all is sent thither, and yet the wretched people have not subsistence! A pound of bread sells at Dresden for elevenpence. We are going to send many more troops thither; and it is so much the fashion to raise regiments, that I wish there were such a neutral kind of beings in England as abbés, that one might have an excuse for not growing military mad, when one has turned the heroic corner of one's age. I am ashamed of being a young rake, when my seniors are covering their grey toupees with helmets and feathers, and accoutring their pot-bellies with cuirasses and martial masquerade habits. Yet rake I am, and abominably so, for a person that begins to wrinkle reverently. I have sat up twice this week till between two and three with the Duchess of Grafton at loo, who, by the way, has got a Pam-child this morning; and on Saturday night I supped with Prince Edward at my Lady Rochford's, and we stayed till half an hour past three. My favour with that Highness continues, or rather increases. He makes everybody make suppers for him to meet me, for I still hold out against
going

going to court. In short, if he were twenty years older, or I could make myself twenty years younger, I might carry him to Campden House,¹ and be as impertinent as ever my Lady Churchill² was—but, as I dread being ridiculous, I shall give my Lord Bute no uneasiness. My Lady Maynard, who divides the favour of this tiny court with me, supped with us. Did you know she sings French ballads very prettily? Lord Rochford played on the guitar, and the Prince sung; there were my two nieces, and Lord Waldegrave, Lord Huntingdon, and Mr. Morrison the groom,³ and the evening was pleasant; but I had a much more agreeable supper last night at Mrs. Clive's, with Miss West, my niece Chomley, and Murphy,⁴ the writing actor, who is very good company, and two or three more. Mrs. Chomley is very lively; you know how entertaining the Clive is, and Miss West is an absolute original.

There is nothing new, but a very dull pamphlet, written by Lord Bath, and his chaplain Douglas, called a *Letter to Two Great Men*. It is a plan for the peace, and much adopted by the City, and much admired by all who are too humble to judge for themselves. I don't tell you of it for the thing itself, but for what Lord Bath said on it. The Dowager Pembroke asked him if he writ it. 'Writ it!' he said; 'yes—and it was all about her—don't you see?' said he, 'in every page that it mentions you?' It talks of a good *peace* (piece), and a safe piece, and an honourable

¹ Campden House at Kensington, formerly the residence of Princess (afterwards Queen) Anne.—T.

² Sarah Jennings, afterwards Duchess of Marlborough.—T.

³ In waiting on the Prince.—T.

⁴ Arthur Murphy (1727-1805).—T. He was one of the first editors of Fielding and wrote a life of Garrick.

honourable piece, and a lasting piéce, ás you are, for so I have known you these forty years.'

I was much diverted t'other morning with another volume on birds by Edwards,¹ who has published four or five. The poor man, who is grown very old and devout begs God to take from him the love of natural philosophy; and having observed some heterodox proceedings among bantam cocks, he proposes that all schools of girls and boys should be promiscuous, lest, if separated, they should learn wayward passions. But what struck me most were his dedications; the last was to God; this is to Lord Bute, as if he was determined to make his fortune in one world or t'other.

Pray read Fontaine's fable of the lion grown old; don't it put you in mind of anything? No! not when his shaggy majesty has borne the insults of the tiger and the horse, etc., etc., and the ass comes last, kicks out his only remaining fang, and asks for a blue bridle? Apropos, I will tell you the turn Charles Townshend gave to this fable. 'My Lord Temple!' said he, 'has quite mistaken the thing; he soars too high at first: people often miscarry by not proceeding by degrees; he went and at once asked for my *Lord Carlisle's* Garter—if he would have been contented to ask first for my *Lady Carlisle's* garter, I don't doubt but he would have obtained it.' Adieu!

Yours ever,

H. W.

I

¹ George Edwards (1694-1773), author of a *History of Birds*, and of *Gleanings from Natural History*.—T.

38. To George Montagu

[*Aetat 42*]

Arlington Street

Jan. 28, 1760

I shall almost frighten you from coming to London, for whether you have the constitution of a horse or a man, you will be equally in danger. All the horses in town are laid up with sore-throats and colds, and are so hoarse, you cannot hear them speak. I, with all my immortality, have been half killed; that violent bitter weather was too much for me; I have had a nervous fever these six or seven weeks every night, and have taken bark enough to have made a rind for Daphne: nay, have even stayed at home two days; but I think my eternity begins to bud again. I am quite of Dr. Garth's¹ mind, who, when anybody commended a hard frost to him, used to reply, 'Yes, Sir, 'fore Gad, very fine weather, Sir, very wholesome weather, Sir; kills trees, Sir; very good for a man, Sir.' There has been cruel havoc among the ladies; my Lady Granby is dead, and the famous Polly, Duchess of Bolton,² and my Lady Besborough. I have no great reason to lament the last, and yet the circumstances of her death, and the horror of it to her family, make one shudder. It was the same sore-throat and fever that carried off four of their children, a very few years ago. My Lord now fell ill of it, very ill, and the eldest daughter slightly. My Lady caught it, attending her husband, and concealed it as long as she could. When at last the physician

¹ Sir Samuel Garth (1661-1719), author of *The Dispensary*.—T.

² Lavinia Fenton, the original 'Polly Peacham' in the *Beggar's Opera*, and widow of the third Duke of Bolton.—T.

cian insisted on her keeping her bed, she said as she went into her room, 'Then, Lord, have mercy upon me, I shall never come out of it again,' and died in three days. Lord Besborough grew outrageously impatient at not seeing her, and would have forced into her room, when she had been dead about four days.—They were obliged to tell him the truth—never was an answer that expressed so much horror! He said, 'And how many children have I left?'—not knowing how far this calamity might have reached. Poor Lady Coventry³ is near completing this black list.

You have heard, I suppose, a horrid story of another kind, of Lord Ferrers murdering his steward in the most barbarous and deliberate manner. He sent away all his servants but one, and, like that heroic murderess Queen Christina,⁴ carried the poor man through a gallery and several rooms, locking them after him, and then bid the man kneel down, for he was determined to kill him. The poor creature flung himself at his feet, but in vain, was shot, and lived twelve hours. Mad as this action was from the consequences, there was no frenzy in his behaviour. He got drunk, and, at intervals, talked of it coolly; but did not attempt to escape, till the colliers beset his house and were determined to take him alive or dead. He is now in the jail at Leicester, and will soon be removed to Tower Hill; unless, as Lord Talbot prophesied in the House of Lords, 'Not being thought bad enough to be shut up, till he had killed somebody

³ The more beautiful of the Miss Gunning.

⁴ Christina, ex-Queen of Sweden. Monardes, her Master of the Horse, was stabbed to death at her instigation, and almost in her presence, in one of the galleries at Fontainebleau.—T.

somebody, he will then be thought too mad to be executed.' But that madman Lord Talbot was no more honoured in his vocation, than other prophets are in their own country.

As you seem amused with my entertainments, I will tell you how I passed yesterday. A party was made to go to the Magdalen House. We met at Northumberland House at five, and set out in four coaches; Prince Edward, Colonel Brudenel his groom, Lady Northumberland, Lady Mary Coke, Lady Carlisle, Miss Pelham, Lady Hertford, Lord Beauchamp, Lord Huntingdon, old Bowman, and I. This new convent is beyond Goodman's Fields, and I assure you, would content any Catholic alive. We were received by—oh, first, a vast mob, for princes are not so common at that end of the town as at this. Lord Hertford, at the head of the governors with their white staves, met us at the door, and led the Prince directly into the chapel, where, before the altar, was an armchair for him, with a blue damask cushion, a *prie-Dieu*, and a footstool of black cloth with gold nails. We sat on forms near him. There were Lord and Lady Dartmouth in the odour of devotion, and many City ladies. The chapel is small and low, but neat, hung with Gothic paper, and tablets of benefactions. At the west end were enclosed the sisterhood, above an hundred and thirty, all in greyish brown stuffs, broad handkerchiefs, and flat straw hats, with a blue riband, pulled quite over their faces. As soon as we entered the chapel, the organ played, and the Magdalens sung a hymn in parts; you cannot imagine how well. The chapel was dressed with orange and myrtle, and there wanted nothing but a little incense, to drive away the devil—or

to

to invite him. Prayers then began, psalms and a sermon: the latter by a young clergyman, one Dodd,¹ who contributed to the Popish idea one had imbibed, by haranguing entirely in the French style, and very eloquently and touchingly. He apostrophized the lost sheep, who sobbed and cried from their souls—so did my Lady Hertford and Fanny Pelham,² till I believe the City dames took them both for Jane Shores. The confessor then turned to the audience, and addressed himself to the Royal Highness, whom he called most illustrious Prince, beseeching his protection. In short, it was a very pleasing performance, and I got *the most illustrious* to desire it might be printed. We had another hymn, and then were conducted to the *parloir*, where the governors kissed the Prince's hand, and then the lady abbess or matron brought us tea. From thence we went to the refectory, where all the nuns, without their hats, were ranged at long tables, ready for supper. A few were handsome, many who seemed to have no title to their profession, and two or three of twelve years old; but all recovered, and looking healthy. I was struck and pleased with the modesty of two of them, who swooned away with the confusion of being stared at—one of these is a niece of Sir Clement Cotterel. We were shown their work, which is making linen, and bead-work; they earn 10*l.* a week. One circumstance diverted me, but amidst all this decorum, I kept it to myself. The wands of the governors are white, but twisted at top with black and white, which

¹ Rev. William Dodd (1729-1777), hanged at Tyburn for forging the name of his former pupil, the Earl of Chesterfield.—T. Dr. Johnson took an active part in the effort to save him from the gallows.

² Daughter of the Prime Minister. She was a notorious gambler and ruined herself at play.

which put me in mind of Jacob's rods, that he placed before the cattle to make them breed. My Lord Hertford would never have forgiven me, if I had joked on this; so I kept my countenance very demurely, nor even inquired, whether among the pensioners there were any *novices* from Mrs. Naylor's.

The court-martial on Lord George Sackville is appointed; General *Onslow*³ is to be *Speaker* of it. Adieu! till I see you; I am glad it will be so soon.

Yours ever,

H. W.

39. *To George Montagu*

[*Ætæt 43*]

Arlington Street

Nov. 13, 1760

Even the honeymoon of a new reign don't produce events every day. There is nothing but the common toying of addresses and kissing hands. The chief difficulty is settled; Lord Gower yields the Mastership of the Horse to Lord Huntingdon, and removes to the Great Wardrobe, from whence Sir Thomas Robinson was to have gone into Ellis's place, but he is saved, and Sir Thomas remains as lumber not yet disposed of. The City, however, have a mind to be out of humour; a paper has been fixed on the Royal Exchange, with these words, 'No petticoat Government, no Scotch minister, no Lord George Sackville.' Two hints totally unfounded, and the other scarce true. No petticoat ever governed less; it is left at Leicester House

³ Brother of Arthur Onslow, the Speaker.—T.

House; Lord George's breeches are a little concerned; and, except Lady Susan Stuart and Sir Harry Erskine, nothing has yet been done for any Scots. For the King himself, he seems all good-nature, and wishing to satisfy everybody. All his speeches are obliging. I saw him again yesterday, and was surprised to find the levee-room had lost so entirely the air of the lion's den. This young man don't stand in one spot, with his eyes fixed royally on the ground, and dropping bits of German news; he walks about, and speaks to everybody. I saw him afterwards on the throne, where he is graceful and genteel, sits with dignity, and reads his answers to addresses well. It was the Cambridge address, carried by the Duke of Newcastle in his Doctor's gown, and looking like the *Médecin malgré lui*. He had been vehemently solicitous for attendance, for fear my Lord Westmorland, who vouchsafes himself to bring the address from Oxford, should outnumber him. Lord Litchfield and several other Jacobites have kissed hands; George Selwyn says they go to St. James's, because now there are so many *Stuarts there*.

Do you know, I had the curiosity to go to the burying t'other night; I had never seen a royal funeral; nay, I walked as a rag of quality, which I found would be, and so it was, the easiest way of seeing it. It is absolutely a noble sight. The Prince's Chamber, hung with purple, and a quantity of silver lamps, the coffin under a canopy of purple velvet, and six vast chandeliers of silver on high stands, had a very good effect. The Ambassador from Tripoli and his son were carried to see that chamber. The procession through a line of footguards, every

every seventh man bearing a torch, the horse-guards lining the outside, their officers with drawn sabres and crape sashes on horseback, the drums muffled, the fifes, bells tolling, and minute guns, all this was very solemn. But the charm was the entrance of the Abbey, where we were received by the Dean and Chapter in rich copes, the choir and almsmen all bearing torches; the whole Abbey so illuminated, that one saw it to greater advantage than by day; the tombs, long aisles, and fretted roof, all appearing distinctly, and with the happiest chiaroscuro. There wanted nothing but incense, and little chapels here and there, with priests saying mass for the repose of the defunct—yet one could not complain of its not being catholic enough. I had been in dread of being coupled with some boy of ten years old—but the heralds were not very accurate, and I walked with George Grenville, taller and older enough to keep me in countenance. When we came to the chapel of Henry the Seventh, all solemnity and decorum ceased—no order was observed, people set or stood where they could or would, the yeomen of the guard were crying out for help, oppressed by the immense weight of the coffin, the Bishop read sadly, and blundered in the prayers, the fine chapter, *Man that is born of a woman*, was chanted, not read, and the anthem, besides being unmeasurably tedious, would have served as well for a nuptial. The real serious part was the figure of the Duke of Cumberland, heightened by a thousand melancholy circumstances. He had a dark brown adonis,¹ and a cloak of black cloth, with a train of five yards. Attending the funeral of a father, how little
reason

¹ An 'adonis' wig.—T.

reason so ever he had to love him, could not be pleasant. His leg extremely bad, yet forced to stand upon it near two hours, his face bloated and distorted with his late paralytic stroke, which has affected, too, one of his eyes, and placed over the mouth of the vault, into which, in all probability, he must himself so soon descend—think how unpleasant a situation! He bore it all with a firm and unaffected countenance. This grave scene was fully contrasted by the burlesque Duke of Newcastle. He fell into a fit of crying the moment he came into the chapel, and flung himself back in a stall, the Archbishop hovering over him with a smelling-bottle—but in two minutes his curiosity got the better of his hypocrisy, and he ran about the chapel with his glass to spy who was or was not there, spying with one hand, and mopping his eyes with t'other. Then returned the fear of catching cold, and the Duke of Cumberland, who was sinking with heat, felt himself weighed down, and turning round, found it was the Duke of Newcastle standing upon his train to avoid the chill of the marble. It was very theatric to look down into the vault, where the coffin lay, attended by mourners with lights. Clavering, the Groom of the Bedchamber, refused to sit up with the body, and was dismissed by the King's order.

I have nothing more to tell you, but a trifle, a very trifle—the King of Prussia has totally defeated Marshal Daun.² This, which would have been prodigious news a month ago, is nothing to-day; it only takes its turn among the questions, 'Who is to be Groom of the Bedchamber?' 'What is Sir T. Robinson

² At Torgau in Saxony, on Nov. 3, 1760.—T.

Robinson to have?’ I have been to Leicester Fields to-day; the crowd was immoderate; I don’t believe it will continue so. Good night.

Yours ever,
H. W.

*40. To Lady Mary Coke*¹

[*Ætæt 43*]

Newmarket

Feb. 12, 1761

You would be puzzled to guess, Madam, the reflections into which solitude and an inn have thrown me. Perhaps you will imagine that I am regretting not being at loo at Princess Emily’s, or that I am detesting the corporation of Lynn for dragging me from the amusements of London; perhaps that I am meditating what I shall say to a set of people I never saw; or—which would be more like me—determining to be out of humour the whole time I am there, and show how little I care whether they elect me again or not. If your absolute sovereignty over me did not exclude all jealousy, you might possibly suspect that the Duchess of Grafton has at least as much share in my chagrin as Pam himself. Come nearer to the point; Madam, and conclude I am thinking of Lady Mary Coke, but in a style much more becoming so sentimental a lover than if I was merely concerned for your absence

In

¹ Lady Mary Campbell (1726-1811), youngest daughter of John, Duke of Argyll. She was one of the most extraordinary characters of the Eighteenth Century. In 1747 she married Lord Coke, the Earl of Leicester’s only son, but refused to live with him as his wife. She got a separation in 1749 and then embarked upon an exciting life of imagined intrigue and persecution in nearly every court of Europe.

In short, Madam, I am pitying you; actually pitying you! how debasing a thought for your dignity! but hear me. I am lamenting your fate; that you, with all your charms and all your merit, are not yet immortal! Is not it provoking that, with so many admirers, and so many pretensions, you are likely to be adored only so long as you live? Charming, in an age when Britain is victorious in every quarter of the globe, you are not yet enrolled in the annals of its fame! Shall Wolfe and Boscawen and Amherst be the talk of future ages, and the name of Mary Coke not be known? 'Tis the height of disgrace! When was there a nation that excelled the rest of the world whose beauties were not as celebrated as its heroes and its orators? Thais, Aspasia, Livia, Octavia—I beg pardon for mentioning any but the last when I am alluding to you—are as familiar to us as Alexander, Pericles, or Augustus; and, except the Spartan ladies, who were always locked up in the two pair of stairs making child-bed linen and round-eared caps, there never were any women of fashion in a gloriously civilized country, but who had cards sent to invite them to the table of fame in common with those drudges, the men, who had done the dirty work of honour. I say nothing of Spain, where they had so true a notion of gallantry, that they never ventured having their brains knocked out, but with a view to the glory of their mistress. If her name was but renowned from Segovia to Saragossa they thought all the world knew it and were content. Nay, Madam, if you had but been lucky enough to be born in France a thousand years ago, that is fifty or sixty, you would have gone down to eternity hand in hand with Louis

Quatorze; and the sun would never have shined on him, as it did purely for seventy years, but a ray of it would have fallen to your share. You would have helped him to pass the Rhine and been coupled with him at least in a *bout rimé*.

And what are we thinking of? Shall we suffer posterity to imagine that we have shed all this blood to engross the pitiful continent of America? Did General Clive drop from heaven only to get half as much as Wortley Montagu? Yet this they must suppose, unless we immediately set about to inform them in authentic verse that your eyes and half a dozen other pair lighted up all this blaze of glory. I will take my death your Ladyship was one of the first admirers of Mr. Pitt, and all the world knows that his eloquence gave this spirit to our arms. But, unluckily, my deposition can only be given in prose. I am neither a hero nor a poet, and, though I am as much in love as if I had cut a thousand throats or made ten thousand verses, posterity will never know anything of my passion. Poets alone are permitted to tell the real truth. Though an historian should, with as many asseverations as Bishop Burnet, inform mankind that the lustre of the British arms under George II was singly and entirely owing to the charms of Lady Mary Coke, it would not be believed—the slightest hint of it in a stanza of Gray would carry conviction to the end of time.

Thus, Madam, I have laid your case before you. You may, as you have done, inspire Mr. Pitt with nobler orations than were uttered in the House of Commons of Greece or Rome; you may set all the world together by the ears; you may send
for

for all the cannon from Cherbourg, all the scalps from Quebec, and for every nabob's head in the Indies; posterity will not be a jot the wiser, unless you give the word of command from Berkeley Square in an ode, or you and I meet in the groves of Sudbrook¹ in the midst of an epic poem. 'Tis a vexatious thought, but your Ladyship and this age of triumphs will be forgotten unless somebody writes verses worthy of you both.

I am your Ladyship's

Most devoted slave,

HOR. WALPOLE.

41. *To George Montagu*

[*Aetat 43*]

Houghton

March 25, 1761

Here I am at Houghton! and alone! in this spot, where (except two hours last month) I have not been in sixteen years! Think, what a crowd of reflections!—no, Gray, and forty churchyards, could not furnish so many; nay, I know one must feel them with greater indifference than I possess, to have patience to put them into verse. Here I am, probably for the last time of my life, though not for the last time—every clock that strikes tells me I am an hour nearer to yonder church—that church, into which I have not yet had courage to enter, where lies that mother on whom I doted, and who doted on me! There are the two rival mistresses of Houghton, neither of whom

¹ Near Kingston-on-Thames; the seat of the Dowager-Duchess of Argyll, Lady Mary Coke's mother.—T.

whom ever wished to enjoy it! There too lies he who founded its greatness, to contribute to whose fall Europe was embroiled—there he sleeps in quiet and dignity, while his friend and his foe, rather his false ally and real enemy, Newcastle and Bath, are exhausting the dregs of their pitiful lives in squabbles and pamphlets!

The surprise the pictures gave me is again renewed—accustomed for many years to see nothing but wretched daubs and varnished copies at auctions, I look at these as enchantment. My own description of them¹ seems poor—but shall I tell you truly—the majesty of Italian ideas almost sinks before the warm nature of Flemish colouring! Alas! don't I grow old? My young imagination was fired with Guido's ideas—must they be plump and prominent as Abishag to warm me now? Does great youth feel with poetic limbs, as well as see with poetic eyes? In one respect I am very young; I cannot satiate myself with looking—an incident contributed to make me feel this more strongly. A party arrived, just as I did, to see the house, a man and three women in riding dresses, and they rode post through the apartments—I could not hurry before them fast enough—they were not so long in *seeing* for the first time, as I could have been in one room, to examine what I knew by heart. I remember formerly being often diverted with this kind of *seers*—they come, ask what such a room is called, in which Sir Robert lay, write it down, admire a lobster or a cabbage in a market-piece, dispute whether the last room was green or purple, and then hurry to the inn for fear the fish should

¹ In the *Ædes Walpoleanæ*.—T.

should be over-dressed—how ~~different~~ my sensations! not a picture here but recalls a history; not one, but I remember in Downing Street or Chelsea where queens and crowds admired them, though *seeing* them as little as these travellers!

When I had drunk tea, I strolled into the garden—they told me it was now called the *pleasure-ground*—what a dissonant idea of pleasure—those groves, those *allées*, where I have passed so many charming moments, are now stripped up or overgrown; many fond paths I could not unravel, though with a very exact clue in my memory—I met two game-keepers, and a thousand hares! In the days when all my soul was tuned to pleasure and vivacity (and you will think, perhaps, it is far from being out of tune yet), I hated Houghton and its solitude—yet I loved this garden; as now, with many regrets, I love Houghton—Houghton, I know not what to call it, a monument of grandeur or ruin! How I have wished this evening for Lord Bute! how I could preach to him! For myself, I do not want to be preached to—I have long considered, how every Balbec must wait for the chance of a Mr. Wood.

The servants wanted to lay me in the great apartment—what, to make me pass my night as I have done my evening! It were like proposing to Margaret Roper to be a duchess in the court that cut off her father's head, and imagining it would please her. I have chosen to sit in my father's little dressing-room, and am now by his scrutoire, where, in the height of his fortune, he used to receive the accounts of his farmers, and deceive himself—or us, with the thoughts of his economy—
how

how wise a man at once, and how weak! For what has he built Houghton? for his grandson to annihilate, or for his son to mourn over! If Lord Burleigh could rise and view his representative driving the Hatfield stage, he would feel as I feel now—poor little Strawberry! at least it will not be stripped to pieces by a descendant!—You will think all these fine meditations dictated by pride, not by philosophy—pray consider through how many mediums philosophy must pass, before it is purified—

. . . how often must it weep, how often burn!

My mind was extremely prepared for all this gloom by parting with Mr. Conway yesterday morning—moral reflections on commonplaces are the livery one likes to wear, when one has just had a real misfortune.—He is going to Germany—I was glad to dress myself up in transitory Houghton, in lieu of very sensible concern. To-morrow I shall be distracted with thoughts—at least images, of very different complexion—I go to Lynn and am to be elected on Friday. I shall return hither on Saturday, again alone, to expect Burleighides¹ on Sunday, whom I left at Newmarket—I must once in my life see him on his grandfather's throne.

Epping

Monday night, thirty-first

No, I have not seen him, he loitered on the road, and I was kept at Lynn till yesterday morning. It is plain I never knew for how many trades I was formed, when at this time of day

I

¹ His nephew, the Earl of Orford.—T.

I can begin electioneering, and succeed in my new vocation. Think of me, the subject of a mob, who was scarce ever before in a mob! addressing them in the town-hall, riding at the head of two thousand people through such a town as Lynn, dining with above two hundred of them, amid bumpers, huzzas, songs, and tobacco, and finishing with country dancing at a ball and sixpenny whisk! I have borne it all cheerfully; nay, have sat hours in *conversation*, the thing upon earth that I hate, have been to hear misses play on the harpsichord, and to see an alderman's copies of Reubens and Carlo Marat. Yet to do the folks justice, they are sensible, and reasonable, and civilized; their very language is polished since I lived among them. I attribute this to their more frequent intercourse with the world and the capital, by the help of good roads and post chaises, which, if they have abridged the King's dominions, have at least tamed his subjects—well! how comfortable it will be to-morrow, to see my perroquet, to play at loo, and not to be obliged to talk seriously—the Heraclitus of the beginning of this letter will be overjoyed on finishing it to sign himself

Your old friend,

DEMOCRITUS.

P. S. I forgot to tell you that my ancient aunt Hammond came over to Lynn to see me—not from any affection, but curiosity—the first thing she said to me, though we have not met these sixteen years, was, ‘Child, you have done a thing to-day, that your father never did in all his life; you sat as they carried you; he always stood the whole time.’ ‘Madam,’ said I, ‘when I am placed in a chair, I conclude I am to sit in
it

it—besides, as I cannot imitate my father in great things, I am not at all ambitious of mimicking him in little ones.’—I am sure she proposes to tell her remark to my uncle Horace’s ghost the instant they meet.

42. To George Montagu

[*Ætæt 43*]

Arlington Street

May 5, 1761

We have lost a young genius, Sir William Williams; an express from Belleisle, arrived this morning, brings nothing but his death. He was shot very unnecessarily, riding too near a battery: in sum, he is a sacrifice to his own rashness—and to ours—for what are we taking Belleisle? I rejoiced at the little loss we had on landing—for the glory, I leave it [to] the Common Council. I am very willing to leave London to them too, and do pass half the week at Strawberry, where my two passions, lilacs and nightingales, are in full bloom. I spent Sunday as if it was Apollo’s birthday; Gray and Mason were with me, and we listened to the nightingales till one o’clock in the morning. Gray has translated two noble incantations¹ from the Lord knows who, a Danish Gray, who lived the Lord knows when. They are to be enchased in a history of English bards, which Mason and he are writing, but of which the former has not writ a word yet, and of which the latter, if he rides Pegasus at his usual foot-pace, will finish the first page two years

¹ *The Fatal Sisters* and *The Descent of Odin*, paraphrases from the Icelandic.—T.

years hence. But the true *franticæ œstrus* resides at present with Mr. Hogarth; I went t'other morning to see a portrait he is painting of Mr. Fox—Hogarth told me he had promised, if Mr. Fox would sit as he liked, to make as good a picture as Vandyke or Rubens could. I was silent—‘Why now,’ said he, ‘you think this very vain, but why should not one speak truth?’ This *truth* was uttered in the face of his own Sigismonda, which is exactly a maudlin whore, tearing off the trinkets that her keeper had given her, to fling at his head. She has her father’s picture in a bracelet on her arm, and her fingers are bloody with the heart, as if she had just bought a sheep’s pluck in St. James’s Market. As I was going, Hogarth put on a very grave face, and said, ‘Mr. Walpole, I want to speak to you.’ I sat down, and said I was ready to receive his commands. For shortness, I will mark this wonderful dialogue by initial letters.

H. I am told you are going to entertain the town with something in our way.¹ W. Not very soon, Mr. Hogarth. H. I wish you would let me have it, to correct; I should be sorry to have you expose yourself to censure. We painters must know more of those things than other people. W. Do you think nobody understands painting but painters? H. Oh! so far from it, there’s Reynolds, who certainly has genius; why, but t’other day he offered 100*l.* for a picture that I would not hang in my cellar; and indeed, to say truth, I have generally found that persons who had studied painting least were the best judges* of it—but what I particularly wanted to say to you
was

¹ *Anecdotes of Painting in England.*

was about Sir James Thornhill² (you know he married Sir James's daughter): I would not have you say anything against him; there was a book published some time ago, abusing him, and it gave great offence—he was the first that attempted history in England, and, I assure you, some Germans have said that he was a very great painter. W. My work will go no lower than the year 1700, and I really have not considered whether Sir J. Thornhill will come within my plan or not; if he does, I fear you and I shall not agree upon his merits. H. I wish you would let me correct it—besides, I am writing something of the same kind myself; I should be sorry we should clash. W. I believe it is not much known what my work is; very few persons have seen it. H. Why, it is a critical history of painting, is not it? W. No, it is an antiquarian history of it in England; I bought Mr. Vertue's MSS., and I believe the work will not give much offence. Besides, if it does, I cannot help it; when I publish anything, I give it to the world to think of it as they please. H. Oh! if it is an antiquarian work, we shall not clash. Mine is a critical work; I don't know whether I shall ever publish it—it is rather an apology for painters—I think it owing to the good sense of the English that they have not painted better. W. My dear Mr. Hogarth, I must take my leave of you, you now grow too wild—and I left him.—If I had stayed, there remained nothing but for him to bite me. I give you my honour this conversation is literal, and, perhaps, as long as you have known Englishmen and painters, you never met with anything so distracted. I had consecrated

² Sir James Thornhill, Knight (1675-1734), Sergeant-Painter to George I.—T.

consecrated a line to his genius, (I mean, for wit) in my Preface; I shall not erase it; but I hope nobody will ask me if he was not mad. Adieu!

Yours ever,

H. W.

43. *To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway*

[Aetat 43]

Arlington Street

Sept. 25, 1761

This is the most unhappy day I have known of years: Bussy goes away! Mankind is again given up to the sword! Peace and you are far from England!

Strawberry Hill

I was interrupted this morning, just as I had begun my letter, by Lord Waldegrave; and then the Duke of Devonshire sent for me to Burlington House to meet the Duchess of Bedford, and see the old pictures from Hardwicke. If my letter reaches you three days later, at least you are saved from a lamentation. Bussy has put off his journey to Monday (to be sure, you know this is Friday): he says this is a strange country, he can get no waggoner to carry his goods on a Sunday. I am glad a Spanish war waits for a conveyance, and that a waggoner's *veto* is as good as a tribune's of Rome, and can stop Mr. Pitt on his career to Mexico. He was going post to conquer it—and Beckford, I suppose, would have had a contract for remitting all

all the gold, of which Mr. Pitt never thinks, unless to serve a City friend. It is serious that we have discussions with Spain, who says France is humbled enough, but must not be ruined: Spanish gold is actually coining in frontier towns of France; and the privilege which Biscay and two other provinces have of fishing on the Coast of Newfoundland has been demanded for all Spain. It was refused peremptorily; and Mr. Secretary Cortez¹ insisted yesterday se'nnight on recalling Lord Bristol.² The rest of the council, who are content with the world they have to govern, without conquering others, prevailed to defer this impetuosity. However, if France or Spain are the least untractable, a war is inevitable: nay, if they don't submit by the first day of the session, I have no doubt but Mr. Pitt will declare it himself on the Address. I have no opinion of Spain intending it: they give France money to protract a war, from which they reap such advantages in their peaceful capacity; and I should think would not give their money if they were on the point of having occasion for it themselves. In spite of you, and all the old barons our ancestors, I pray that we may have done with glory, and would willingly burn every Roman and Greek historian who have done nothing but transmit precedents for cutting throats.

The Coronation is over: 'tis even a more gorgeous sight than I imagined. I saw the procession and the Hall; but the return was in the dark. In the morning they had forgot the Sword of State, the chairs for King and Queen, and their canopies. They
used

¹ Mr. Pitt, then Secretary of State.—WALPOLE.

² The English Ambassador at the court of Madrid.—WALPOLE.

used the Lord Mayor's for the first, and made the last in the Hall: so they did not set forth till noon; and then, by a childish compliment to the King, reserved the illumination of the Hall till his entry; by which means they arrived like a funeral, nothing being discernible but the plumes of the Knights of the Bath, which seemed the hearse. Lady Kildare, the Duchess of Richmond, and Lady Pembroke were the capital beauties. Lady Harrington, the finest figure at a distance; old Westmoreland, the most majestic. Lady Hertford could not walk, and indeed I think is in a way to give us great anxiety. She is going to Ragley to ride. Lord Beauchamp was one of the King's train-bearers. Of all the incidents of the day, the most diverting was what happened to the Queen. She had a retiring-chamber, with *all* conveniences, prepared behind the altar. She went thither—in the *most convenient* what found she but—the Duke of Newcastle! Lady Hardwicke died three days before the ceremony, which kept away the whole house of Yorke. Some of the peeresses were dressed overnight, slept in armchairs, and were waked if they tumbled their heads. Your sister Harris's maid, Lady Peterborough, was a comely figure. My Lady Cowper refused, but was forced to walk with Lady Macclesfield. Lady Falmouth was not there; on which George Selwyn said, 'that those peeresses who were most used to *walk*, did not.' I carried my Lady Townshend, Lady Hertford, Lady Anne Connolly, my Lady Hervey, and Mrs. Clive, to my deputy's house at the gate of Westminster Hall. My Lady Townshend said she should be very glad to see a

Coronation

Coronation, as she never had seen one. 'Why,' said I, 'Madam, you walked at the last?' 'Yes, child,' said she, 'but I saw nothing of it: I only looked to see who looked at me.' The Duchess of Queensbury walked! her affectation that day was to do nothing preposterous. The Queen has been at the Opera, and says she will go once a week. This is a fresh disaster to our box, where we have lived so harmoniously for three years. We can get no alternative but that over Miss Chudleigh's; and Lord Strafford and Lady Mary Coke will not subscribe, unless we can. The Duke of Devonshire and I are negotiating with all our art to keep our party together. The crowds at the Opera and play when the King and Queen go, are a little greater than what I remember. The late Royalties went to the Haymarket, when it was the fashion to frequent the other Opera in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Lord Chesterfield one night came into the latter, and was asked, if he had been at the other house? 'Yes,' said he, 'but there was nobody but the King and Queen; and as I thought they might be talking business, I came away.'

Thank you for your journals: the best route you can send me would be of your journey homewards. Adieu!

Yours most sincerely,

HOR. WALPOLE.

P. S. If you ever hear from, or write to, such a person as Lady Ailesbury, pray tell her she is worse to me in point of correspondence than ever you said I was to you, and that she sends me everything but letters!

44. To George Montagu

[Aetat 44]

Arlington Street

Dec. 8, 1761

I return you the list of prints, and shall be glad you will bring me all to which I have affixed this mark X. The rest I have; yet the expense of the whole list would not ruin me. Lord Farnham, who, I believe, departed this morning, brings you the list of the Duke of Devonshire's pictures.

I had been told that Mr. Bourk's history was of England, not of Ireland—I am glad it is the latter, for I am now in Mr. Hume's England, and would fain read no more—I not only know what has been written, but what would be written. Our story is so exhausted, that to make it new, they really *make* it *new*. Mr. Hume has exalted Edward the Second, and depressed Edward the Third. The next historian, I suppose, will make James the First a hero, and geld Charles the Second.

Fingal is come out—I have not yet got through it—not but it is very fine—yet I cannot at once compass an epic poem now. It tires me to death to read how many ways a warrior is like the moon, or the sun, or a rock, or a lion, or the ocean. *Fingal* is a brave collection of similes, and will serve all the boys at Eton and Westminster for these twenty years. I will trust you with a secret, but you must not disclose it, I should be ruined with my Scotch friends—in short, I cannot believe it genuine—I cannot believe a regular poem of six books has been preserved, uncorrupted, by oral tradition, from times before
Christianity

Christianity was introduced into the island. What! preserved unadulterated by savages dispersed among mountains, and so often driven from their dens, so wasted by wars civil and foreign! Has one man ever got all by heart? I doubt it. Were parts preserved by some, other parts by others? Mighty lucky that the tradition was never interrupted, nor any part lost—not a verse, not a measure, not the sense! luckier and luckier—I have been extremely qualified myself lately for this Scotch memory; we have had nothing but a coagulation of rains, fogs, and frosts, and though they have clouded all understanding, I suppose, if I had tried, I should have found that they thickened, and gave great consistence to my remembrance.

You want news—I must make it, if I send it. To change the dullness of the scene I went to the play, where I had not been this winter. They are so crowded, that though I went before six, I got no better place than a fifth row, where I heard very ill, and was pent for five hours without a soul near me that I knew. It was *Cymbeline*, and appeared to me as long as if everybody in it went really to Italy in every act, and came back again. With a few pretty passages and a scene or two, it is so absurd and tiresome, that I am persuaded Garrick. . . .¹

45. *To George Montagu*

[Ætæt 45]

Arlington Street

Feb. 2, 1762

I scolded you in my last, but I shall forgive you, if you return soon to England, as you talk of doing; for though you are

¹ The rest of the letter is missing in the Kimbolton MS.—T.

are an abominable correspondent; and only write to beg letters, you are good company, and I have a notion I shall still be glad to see you.

Lady Mary Wortley is arrived; I have seen her; I think her avarice, her dirt, and her vivacity, are all increased. Her dress, like her languages, is a *galimatias* of several countries; the groundwork, rags; and the embroidery, nastiness. She wears no cap, no handkerchief, no gown, no petticoat, no shoes. An old black-laced hood represents the first; the fur of a horseman's coat, which replaces the third, serves for the second; a dimity petticoat is deputy, and officiates for the fourth; and slippers act the part of the last. When I was at Florence, and she was expected there, we were drawing *Sortes Virgilianas* for her; we literally drew

Insanam vatem aspicias.—

It would have been a stronger prophecy now, even than it was then.

You told me not a word of Mr. McNaghton, and I have a great mind to be as coolly indolent about our famous ghost in Cock Lane—why should one steal half an hour from one's amusements to tell a story to a friend in another island? I could send you volumes on the ghost, and I believe if I was to stay a little, I might send you its *life*, dedicated to my Lord Dartmouth, by the Ordinary of Newgate, its two great patrons. A drunken parish clerk set it on foot out of revenge, the Methodists have adopted it, and the whole town of London think of nothing else. Elizabeth Canning and the Rabbit-woman

woman were modest impostors in comparison of this, which goes on without saving the least appearances. The Archbishop, who would not suffer *The Minor* to be acted in ridicule of the Methodists, permits this farce to be played every night, and I shall not be surprised if they perform in the great hall at Lambeth. I went to hear it—for it is not an *apparition*, but an *audition*.—We set out from the Opera, changed our clothes at Northumberland House, the Duke of York, Lady Northumberland, Lady Mary Coke, Lord Hertford, and I, all in one hackney coach, and drove to the spot; it rained torrents; yet the lane was full of mob, and the house so full we could not get in—at last they discovered it was the Duke of York, and the company squeezed themselves into one another's pockets to make room for us. The house, which is borrowed, and to which the ghost has adjourned, is wretchedly small and miserable; when we opened the chamber, in which were fifty people, with no light but one tallow candle at the end, we tumbled over the bed of the child to whom the ghost comes, and whom they are murdering there by inches in such insufferable heat and stench. At the top of the room are ropes to dry clothes—I asked, if we were to have rope-dancing between the acts?—we had nothing; they told us, as they would at a puppet-show, that it would not come that night till seven in the morning—that is, when there are only prentices and old women. We stayed, however, till half an hour after one. The Methodists have promised them contributions; provisions are sent in like forage, and all the taverns and ale-houses in the neighbourhood make fortunes. The most diverting part is to hear people
wondering

wondering *when it will be found out*—as if there was anything to find out—as if the actors would make their noises where they can be discovered. However, as this pantomime cannot last much longer, I hope Lady Fanny Shirley will set up a ghost of her own at Twickenham, and then you shall *hear* one. The Methodists, as Lord Aylsford assured Mr. Chute two nights ago at Lord Dacre's, have attempted ghosts three times in Warwickshire. There! how good I am!

Yours ever,

H. W.

46. To George Montagu

[Aetat 45]

Strawberry Hill

May 17, 1763

‘On vient de nous donner une très jolie fête au château de Straberri: tout étoit tapissé de narcisses, de tulipes, et de lilacs; des cors de chasse, des clarionettes, des petits vers galants faits par des fées, et qui se trouvoient sous la presse, des fruits à la glace, du thé, du café, des biscuits, et force hot-rolls.’—This is not the beginning of a letter to you, but of one that I might suppose sets out to-night for Paris, or rather, which I do not suppose will set out thither, for though the narrative is circumstantially true, I don't believe the actors were pleased enough with the scene, to give so favourable an account of it. The French do not come hither *to see*. *A l'angloise* happened to be the word in fashion; and half a dozen of the most fashionable people have been the dupes of it. I take for granted

granted that their next mode will be à *Piroquoise*, that they may be under no obligation of realizing their pretensions. Madame de Boufflers I think will die a martyr to a taste, which she fancied she had, and finds she has not. Never having stirred ten miles from Paris, and having only rolled in an easy coach from one hotel to another on a gliding pavement, she is already worn out with being hurried from morning till night from one sight to another. She rises every morning so fatigued with the toils of the preceding day, that she has not strength, if she had inclination, to observe the least, or the finest thing she sees! She came hither to-day to a great breakfast I made for her, with her eyes a foot deep in her head, her hands dangling, and scarce able to support her knotting-bag. She had been yesterday to see a ship launched, and went from Greenwich by water to Ranelagh. Madame Dusson, who is Dutch-built, and whose muscles are more pleasure-proof, came with her; there were besides, Lady Mary Coke, Lord and Lady Holderness, the Duke and Duchess of Grafton, Lord Hertford, Lord Villiers, Offley, Messieurs de Fleury, Déon,¹ et Duclos. The latter is author of the *Life of Louis Onze*; dresses like a dissenting minister, which I suppose is the livery of a *bel esprit*, and is much more impetuous than agreeable. We breakfasted in the great parlour, and I had filled the hall and large cloister by turns with French horns and clarionets. As the French ladies had never seen a printing-house, I carried them into mine

¹ Charles Geneviève de Beaumont D'Eon (1728-1810), at this time secretary to the Duc de Nivernais, on whose return to France he was for a short period Minister Plenipotentiary in London. He subsequently masqueraded for many years in woman's dress, both in England and France.—T.

mine; they found something ready set, and desiring to see what it was, it proved as follows:

The Press speaks—

FOR MADAME DE BOUFFLERS

The graceful fair, who loves to know,
Nor dreads the north's inclement snow;
Who bids her polish'd accent wear
The British diction's harsher air;
Shall read her praise in every clime
Where types can speak or poets rhyme.

FOR MADAME DUSSON

Feign not an ignorance of what I speak;
You could not miss my meaning, were it Greek.
'Tis the same language Belgium utter'd first,
The same which from admiring Gallia burst.
True sentiment a like expression pours;
Each country says the same to eyes like yours.

You will comprehend that the first speaks English, and that the second does not; that the second is handsome, and the first not; and that the second was born in Holland. This little *gentillesse* pleased, and atoned for the popery of my house, which was not serious enough for Madame de Boufflers, who is Montmorency, *et du sang du premier Chrétien*; and too serious for Madame Dusson, who is a Dutch Calvinist. The latter's husband was not here, nor Drumgold,¹ who have both got fevers, nor the Duc de Nivernois, who dined at Claremont. The gallery is not advanced enough to give them any idea at
all

¹ Properly written Dromgoole. The Colonel belonged to an Irish family of Danish extraction. He was at this time acting as secretary to the Duc de Nivernais. When Dr. Johnson visited Paris in 1775 he was entertained by Dromgoole, who was then at the head of the École Militaire.—T.

all, as they are not apt to go out of their way for one; but the cabinet, and the glory of yellow glass at top, which had a charming sun for a foil, did surmount their indifference, especially as they were animated by the Duchess of Grafton, who had never happened to be here before, and who perfectly entered into the air of enchantment and fairyism, which is the tone of the place, and was peculiarly so to-day—apropos, when do you design to come hither? Let me know, that I may have no measures to interfere with receiving you and your Grandsons.¹

Before Lord Bute ran away, he made Mr. Bentley a Commissioner of the Lottery; I don't know whether a single or double one: the latter, which I hope it is, is two hundred a year.

Thursday, 19th

I am ashamed of myself to have nothing but a journal of pleasures to send you! I never passed a more agreeable day than yesterday. Miss Pelham gave the French an entertainment at Esher, but they have been so feasted and amused, that none of them were well enough, or reposed enough, to come, but Nivernois and Madame Dusson. The rest of the company were, the Graftons, Lady Rockingham, Lord and Lady Pembroke, Lord and Lady Holderness, Lord Villiers, Count Woronzow the Russian minister, Lady Sondes, Mr. and Mrs. Pelham, Miss Mary Pelham, Lady Mary Coke, Mrs. Pitt, Mrs. Anne Pitt, and Mr. Shelley. The day was delightful, the scene transporting, the trees, lawns, concaves, all in the perfection

¹ Montagu's brother, General Charles Montagu, had recently married Countess Grandison.—T.

tion in which the ghost of Kent would joy to see them. At twelve we made the tour of the farm in eight chaises and calashes, horsemen, and footmen, setting out like a picture of Wouverman. My lot fell in the lap of Mrs. Anne Pitt, which I could have excused, as she was not at all in the style of the day, romantic, but political. We had a magnificent dinner, cloaked in the modesty of earthenware: French horns and hautboys on the lawn. We walked to the belvedere on the summit of the hill, where a threatened storm only served to heighten the beauty of the landscape, a rainbow on a dark cloud falling precisely behind the tower of a neighbouring church, between another tower and the building at Claremont. Monsieur de Nivernois, who had been absorbed all day, and lagging behind, translating my verses, was delivered of his version, and of some more lines which he wrote on Miss Pelham in the belvedere while we drank tea and coffee. From thence we passed into the wood, and the ladies formed a circle on chairs before the mouth of the cave, which was overhung to a vast height with woodbines, lilacs, and laburnums, and dignified by those tall shapely cypresses. On the descent of the hill were placed the French horns; the abigails, servants, and neighbours wandering below by the river—in short, it was Parnassus, as Watteau would have painted it. Here we had a rural syllabub, and part of the company returned to town; but were replaced by Giardini¹ and Onofrio, who with Nivernois on the violin, and Lord Pembroke on the bass, accompanied Miss Pelham, Lady Rockingham, and the Duchess of Grafton, who sang.

This

¹ Felice de'Giardini (1716-1796) a celebrated violinist.—T.

This little concert lasted till past ten; then there were minuets, and as we had seven couple left, it concluded with a country dance—I blush again, for I danced, but was kept in countenance by Nivernois, who has one wrinkle more than I have. A quarter after twelve they sat down to supper, and I came home by a charming moonlight. I am going to dine in town, and to a great ball with fireworks at Miss Chudleigh's—but I return hither on Sunday, to bid adieu to this abominable Arcadian life, for really when one is not young, one ought to do nothing but *s'ennuyer*—I will try, but I always go about it awkwardly. Adieu!

Yours ever,

H. W.

P. S. I enclose a copy of both the English and French verses.

47. *To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway*

[Ætæt 45]

Arlington Street

May 21, 1763

You have now seen the celebrated Madame de Boufflers,¹ I dare say you could in that short time perceive that she is agreeable, but I dare say too that you will agree with me that vivacity is by no means the *partage* of the French—bating the *étourderie* of the *mousquetaires* and of a high-dried *petit maître* or two, they appear to me more lifeless than Germans. I cannot comprehend how they came by the character of a lively people

¹ The Comtesse de Boufflers, who since the Revolution in France of the year 1789, resided in England for two or three years with her daughter-in-law the Comtesse Emilie de Boufflers.—WALPOLE.

people. Charles Townshend has more *sal volatile* in him than the whole nation. Their King is taciturnity itself, Mirepoix was a walking mummy, Nivernois has about as much life as a sick favourite child, and M. Dusson is a good-humoured country gentleman, who has been drunk the day before, and is upon his good behaviour. If I have the gout next year, and am thoroughly humbled by it again, I will go to Paris, that I may be upon a level with them: at present, I am *trop fou* to keep them company. Mind, I do not insist that, to have spirits, a nation should be as frantic as poor Fanny Pelham, as absurd as the Duchess of Queensbury, or as dashing as the Virgin Chudleigh. Oh that you had been at her ball t'other night! History could never describe it and keep its countenance. The Queen's real birthday, you know, is not kept: this Maid of Honour kept it—nay, while the court is in mourning, expected people to be out of mourning; the Queen's family really was so, Lady Northumberland having desired leave for them. A scaffold was erected in Hyde Park for fireworks. To show the illuminations without to more advantage, the company were received in an apartment totally dark, where they remained for two hours.—If they gave rise to any more birthdays, who could help it? The fireworks were fine, and succeeded well. On each side of the court were two large scaffolds for the Virgin's tradespeople. When the fireworks ceased, a large scene was lighted in the court, representing their Majesties; on each side of which were six obelisks, painted with emblems, and illuminated; mottoes beneath in Latin and English: 1. For the Prince of Wales, a ship, *Multorum spes*.

2. For the Princess Dowager, a bird of paradise, and *two* little ones, *Meos ad sidera tollo*. People smiled. 3. Duke of York, a temple, *Virtuti et honori*. 4. Princess Augusta, a bird of paradise, *Non habet parem*—unluckily this was translated *I have no peer*. People laughed out, considering where this was exhibited. 5. The three younger Princes, an orange-tree, *Promittit et dat*. 6. The two younger Princesses, the flower crown-imperial. I forget the Latin: the translation was silly enough, *Bashful in youth, graceful in age*. The lady of the house made many apologies for the poorness of the performance, which she said was only oil-paper, painted by one of her servants; but it really was fine and pretty. The Duke of Kingston was in a frock, *comme chez lui*. Behind the house was a cenotaph for the Princess Elizabeth, a kind of illuminated cradle; the motto, *All the honours the dead can receive*. This burying-ground was a strange codicil to a festival; and, what was more strange, about one in the morning, this sarcophagus burst out into crackers and guns. The Margrave of Anspach,¹ began the ball with the Virgin. The supper was most sumptuous.

You ask, when I propose to be at Park Place. I ask, shall not you come to the Duke of Richmond's masquerade, which is the 6th of June? I cannot well be with you till towards the end of that month.

The enclosed is a letter which I wish you to read attentively, to give me your opinion upon it, and return it. It is from a
sensible

¹ Christian Charles, Margrave of Anspach. He sold his territories to Prussia in 1791, and died in 1806.—T.

sensible friend of mine in Scotland; who has lately corresponded with me on the enclosed subjects, which I little understand; but I promised to communicate his ideas to George Grenville, if he would state them—are they practicable? I wish much that something could be done for those brave soldiers and sailors, who will all come to the gallows, unless some timely provision can be made for them.—The former part of his letter relates to a grievance he complains of, that men who have not served are admitted into garrisons, and then into our hospitals, which were designed for meritorious sufferers. Adieu!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

48. *To Sir Horace Mann*

[Aetat 46]

Arlington Street

Dec. 12, 1763

My last journal was dated the 18th of last month. Since that period we have been totally employed upon Mr. Wilkes, or events flowing from him; for he is an inexhaustible source. I shall move regularly, and tell you his history in order.

In the first place, he is not dead of his wound, though not yet out of danger, for they think another piece of his coat is to come away, as two have already.¹

On

¹ A month previous Wilkes had fought a duel with one Samuel Martin, M. P. for Camelford. Martin procured the reversion of one of Walpole's offices and endured a fever of anxiety whenever Walpole was ill, to Walpole's amusement.

On the 23rd we, the Commons, had a debate that lasted late, whether we should proceed to the question on privilege, as Wilkes could not attend. There was a great defection among the royal troops, and the minority amounted to 166: but the next day, on the question itself, it sunk to 133, when we resigned our privilege into the hands of any messengers that should be sent for it. Mr. Pitt was brought thither in flannels, and spoke for two hours, but was forced to retire four hours before we came to the question.

These debates were followed by a curious account of the famous blasphemous and bawdy poem, the *Essay on Woman*, published by one Kidgell,¹ a Methodist parson, who had been employed to hunt it out. The man has most deservedly drawn on himself a torrent of indignation and odium, which I suppose he will forget in a deanery.²

The next proceeding was in the Lords, who sat till ten at night on the question of agreeing to our resolutions. The Duke of Cumberland, who voted at the head of the minority, was as unsuccessful as he has been in other engagements, and was beaten by 114 to 35.

So much for within doors. But without, where the minority is the majority, the event was very different. The *North Briton* was ordered to be burned by the hangman at Cheapside on the third of this month. A prodigious riot ensued; the sheriffs were mobbed, the constables beaten and the paper with much difficulty set on fire by a link, and then rescued. The
ministry

¹ Rev. John Kidgell, Chaplain to the Earl of March.—T.

² Kidgell was forced to leave England for debt, and died abroad.—WALPOLE.

ministry, some in a panic and some, in a rage, fetched the sheriffs before both Houses; but, after examinations and conferences for four days, the whole result was, that all the world had appeared to be on the same side, that is, not well disposed to the administration. This dissatisfaction has been increased by a violent attack made by the Duke of Bedford on the Lord Mayor, Alderman, and Common Council, for not discountenancing and suppressing the riot; and though he was abandoned by the rest of the ministry, who paid court to the City at his Grace's expense, they were so exasperated, that a motion being made to thank the sheriffs for their behaviour, and to prosecute one of the rioters, who is in prison, it was rejected on a division by the casting vote of the Lord Mayor.

The ministry have received a still greater mortification: the Under-Secretary, Mr. Wood, has been cast in the Common Pleas in damages of a thousand pounds to Mr. Wilkes; the printers too have recovered four hundred; and, what is still more material, the Solicitor-General could not make out his proof of Wilkes being author of the *North Briton*.

The last scene has been an attempt to assassinate Wilkes. A sea-lieutenant, called Alexander Dunn,¹ got into his house on Thursday night last for that purpose; but he is not only mad, but so mad that he had declared his intention in a coffee-house some nights before; and said twelve more Scotchmen, for he is one, were engaged in the same design.

I have told you all this briefly, but you may imagine what
noise

¹ Dunn was examined at the bar of the House of Commons, and found to be insane.—T.

noise so many events have made in the hands of some hundred thousand commentators.

The famous Lord Shelburne,¹ and the no less famous Colonel Barré²—I don't know whether their fame has reached you—are turned out for joining the opposition.

The approaching holidays will suspend farther hostilities for some time, or prepare more. We have scarce any other kind of news than politics. The interlude of Princess Augusta's wedding will be of very short duration.

You have seen some mention in the papers of Monsieur D'Eon, who, from secretary to Monsieur de Nivernois, became Plenipotentiary; an honour that turned his brain. His madness first broke out upon one Vergy, an adventurer, whose soul he threatened to put into the chamber-pot and make him drink it. This rage was carried so far one night at Lord Halifax's, that he was put under arrest. Being told his behaviour was a breach of the peace, he thought it meant the Peace he had signed, and grew ten times madder. This idea he has thrust into a wild book that he has published, the title-page of which would divert you; he states all his own names, titles, and offices: Noble Claude, Geneviève, Louis, Auguste, Caesar, Alexandre, Hercule, and I don't know what, Docteur en Droit: the *chute* from Caesar to Master Doctor is admirable. The conclusion of the story is, that the poor creature has all the papers of the negotiation in his hands, and threescore thousand livres belonging to the Comte de Guerchy, and will deliver neither one nor the other

¹ Afterwards the first Marquis of Landsdowne and (1782-83) Prime Minister.

² After Shelburne's dismissal, he became an adherent of Pitt. He was one of the most prominent members of the opposition to Lord North's ministry.—T.

other. He is recalled from home; and forbidden the court here, but enjoys the papers, and lives on the money, and they don't know how to recover either. Monsieur de Guerchy has behaved with the utmost tenderness and humanity to him. This minister is an agreeable man, and pleases much.

I have received your long letter of November 12th, with your expectations of the Duke of York, the Woronzows, and the Garricks, most of whom are, I suppose, arrived by this time. The Chelsea china, as you guessed, was a present from the Duchess of Grafton: I told her how pleased you was with it, and that you flattered yourself it was her present. She thought you knew it, for she says she had writ you two letters.

Adieu! You must live upon this letter for some time. Our *villeggiatura* begins when yours ends. The town will be quite empty in a week, till the 18th or 20th of January, unless folks come to stare at the Prince of Brunswick; but I don't know when he is to be here. Nay, you will not want English news, while you have English Princes, Russian Chancellors, and English players.

49. *To the Rev. William Cole*¹

[Aetat 47]

Strawberry Hill

March 9, 1765

Dear Sir,—I had time to write but a short note with the *Castle of Otranto*, as your messenger called on me at four o'clock

¹William Cole (1714-1782), antiquary, at this time Rector of Bletchley. He was a former school-fellow at Eton of Horace Walpole, whose antiquarian tastes led him (in 1762) to open a correspondence with Cole, which was continued until Cole's death. Cole was a Tory and a High Churchman, with leanings to Roman Catholicism, but in

o'clock, as I was going to dine abroad. Your partiality to me and Strawberry have, I hope, inclined you to excuse the wildness of the story. You will even have found some traits to put you in mind of this place. When you read of the picture quitting its panel, did not you recollect the portrait of Lord Falkland, all in white, in my gallery? Shall I even confess to you, what was the origin of this romance? I waked one morning in the beginning of last June, from a dream, of which, all I could recover was, that I had thought myself in an ancient castle (a very natural dream for a head filled like mine with Gothic story), and that on the uppermost banister of a great staircase I saw a gigantic hand in armour. In the evening I sat down, and began to write, without knowing in the least what I intended to say or relate. The work grew on my hands, and I grew fond of it—add that I was very glad to think of anything, rather than politics—in short, I was so engrossed with my tale, which I completed in less than two months, that one evening, I wrote from the time I had drunk my tea, about six o'clock, till half an hour after one in the morning, when my hand and fingers were so weary, that I could not hold the pen to finish the sentence, but left Matilda and Isabella talking, in the middle of a paragraph. You will laugh at my earnestness, but if I have amused you, by retracing with any fidelity the manners of ancient days, I am content, and give you leave to think me as idle as you please.

You are, as you have long been to me, exceedingly kind, and

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spite of divergence of opinion he was always on good terms with Walpole. The latter found Cole's knowledge and industry of great use, while Cole was not insensible to the honour of being a correspondent of Walpole's—T.

I should, with great satisfaction, embrace your offer of visiting the solitude of Blecheley, though my cold is in a manner gone, and my cough quite, if I was at liberty: but as I am preparing for my French journey, I have forty businesses upon my hands, and can only now and then purloin a day, or half a day, to come hither. You know I am not cordially disposed to your French journey, which is much more serious, as it is to be much more lasting. However, though I may suffer by your absence, I would not dissuade what may suit your inclination and circumstances. One thing, however, has struck me, which I must mention, though it would depend on a circumstance that would give me the most real concern. It was suggested to me by that real fondness I have for your MSS., for your kindness about which I feel the utmost gratitude. You would not, I think, leave them behind you; and are you aware of the danger they would run, if you settled entirely in France? Do you know that the King of France is heir to all strangers who die in his dominions, by what they call the *Droit d'Aubaine*? Sometimes by great interest and favour, persons have obtained a remission of this right in their lifetime; and yet that, even that, has not secured their effects from being embezzled. Old Lady Sandwich had obtained this remission, and yet, though she left everything to the present Lord, her grandson, a man for whose rank one should have thought they would have had regard, the King's officers forced themselves into her house, after her death, and plundered. You see, if you go, I shall expect to have your MSS., deposited with me—seriously, you must leave them in safe custody behind you.

Lord

Lord Essex's trial is printed with the State Trials. In return for your obliging offer, I can acquaint you with a delightful publication of this winter, a collection of old ballads and poetry,¹ in three volumes, many from Pepys's collection at Cambridge. There were three such published between thirty and forty years ago, but very carelessly, and wanting many in this set: indeed, there were others, of a looser sort, which the present editor, who is a clergyman, thought it decent to omit.

When you go into Cheshire, and upon your ramble, may I trouble you with a commission, but about which you must promise me not to go a step out of your way. Mr. Bateman has got a cloister at Old Windsor, furnished with ancient wooden chairs, most of them triangular, but all of various patterns, and carved and turned in the most uncouth and whimsical forms. He picked them up one by one, for two, three, five, or six shillings apiece, from different farmhouses in Herefordshire. I have long envied and coveted them. There may be such in poor cottages in so neighbouring a county as Cheshire. I should not grudge any expense for purchase or carriage; and should be glad even of a couple such for my cloister here. When you are copying inscriptions in a churchyard in any village, think of me, and step into the first cottage you see—but don't take farther trouble than that. I long to know what your bundle of manuscripts from Cheshire contains.

My bower is determined, but not at all what it is to be. Though I write romances, I cannot tell how to build all that
belongs

¹ Percy's *Reliques*.—T.

belongs to them. Madame Danois, in the Fairy Tales, used to tapestry them with jonquils; but as that furniture will not last above a fortnight in the year, I shall prefer something more huckaback. I have decided that the outside shall be of *treillage*, which, however, I shall not commence, till I have again seen some of old Louis's old-fashioned *galanteries* at Versailles. Rosamond's bower, you, and I, and Tom Hearne know, was a labyrinth, but as my territory will admit of a very short clew, I lay aside all thoughts of a mazy habitation; though a bower is very different from an arbour, and must have more chambers than one. In short, I both know, and don't know, what it should be. I am almost afraid I must go and read Spenser, and wade through his allegories, and drawling stanzas, to get at a picture—but, good night! you see how one gossips, when one is alone, and at quiet on one's own dunghill!—well! it may be trifling, yet it is such trifling as Ambition never is happy enough to know! Ambition orders palaces, but it is Content that chats for a page or two over a bower.

Yours ever,

H. WALPOLE.

50. *To Sir David Dalrymple*¹

[Aetat 47]

Strawberry Hill

April 21, 1765

Sir,—Except the mass of Conway papers, on which I have not yet had time to enter seriously, I am sorry I have nothing
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¹ Sir David Dalrymple, Bart. (1726-1792) afterwards Lord Hailes. He was the author of the *Annals of Scotland*, besides many less important works.—T.

at present that would answer your purpose. Lately, indeed, I have had little leisure to attend to literary pursuits. I have been much out of order with a violent cold and cough for great part of the winter, and the distractions of this country, which reach even those who mean the least to profit by their country, have not left even me, who hate politics, without some share in them. Yet as what one does not love, cannot engross one entirely, I have amused myself a little with writing. Our friend Lord Finlater will perhaps show you the fruit ¹ of that trifling, though I had not the confidence to trouble you with such a strange thing as a miraculous story, of which I fear the greatest merit is the novelty.

I have lately perused with much pleasure a collection of old ballads, to which I see, Sir, you have contributed with your usual benevolence. Continue this kindness to the public, and smile as I do, when the pains you take for them are misunderstood or perverted. I would not omit my notes in your case. Will they, who wanted common sense when they read your first edition, enjoy an ampler portion of it on the publication of the second? Authors must content themselves with hoping that two or three intelligent persons in an age will understand the merit of their writings; and though those authors are bound in good breeding to suppose that the public in general is enlightened, they who are in the secret know how few of that public they have any reason to wish should read their works. I beg pardon of my masters the public, and am confident, Sir, you will not betray me: but let me beg you not
to

¹ *The Castle of Otranto.*

to defraud the few that deserve your information, in compliment to those who are not capable of receiving it. Do as I do about my small house here. Everybody that comes to see it or me, are so good as to wonder that I don't make this or that alteration. I never haggle with them, but always say I intend it. They are satisfied with the attention and themselves, and I remain with the enjoyment of my house as I like it. Adieu! dear Sir.

I am your much obliged and obedient humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

P.S. As I think of making Lord Hertford a visit at Paris this summer, I should be happy if you would honour me with any commission thither. Perhaps there I could easily find any prints of Nanteuil that you may still want.

(51. *To Lady Hervey*

[*Aetat 47*]

Strawberry Hill

June 11, 1765

I am almost as much ashamed, Madam, to plead the true cause of my faults towards your Ladyship, as to have been guilty of any neglect. It is scandalous, at my age, to have been carried backwards and forwards to balls and suppers and parties by very young people, as I was all last week. My resolutions of growing old and staid are admirable: I wake with a sober plan, and intend to pass the day with my friends—then comes the Duke of Richmond, and hurries me down to Whitehall to dinner—then the Duchess of Grafton sends for me to loo
in

in Upper Grosvenor Street—before I can get thither, I am begged to step to Kensington, to give Mrs. Anne Pitt my opinion about a bow window—after the loo, I am to march back to Whitehall to supper—and after that, am to walk with Miss Pelham on the terrace till two in the morning, because it is moonlight and her chair is not come. All this does not help my morning laziness; and, by the time I have breakfasted, fed my birds and my squirrels, and dressed, there is an auction ready. In short, Madam, this was my life last week, and is I think every week, with the addition of forty episodes.—Yet, ridiculous as it is, I send it to your Ladyship, because I had rather you should laugh at me than be angry. I cannot offend you in intention, but I fear my sins of omission are equal to many a good Christian's. Pray forgive me. I really will begin to be between forty and fifty by the time I am fourscore: and I truly believe I shall bring my resolutions within compass; for I have not chalked out any particular business that will take me above forty years more; so that, if I do not get acquainted with the grandchildren of all the present age, I shall lead a quiet sober life yet before I die.

As Mr. Bateman's is the kingdom of flowers, I must not wish to send you any; else, Madam, I could load waggons with acacias, honeysuckles, and seringas. Madame de Juliac, who dined here yesterday, owned that the climate and odours equalled Languedoc. I fear the want of rain made the turf put her in mind of it, too. Monsieur de Caraman entered into the Gothic spirit of the place, and really seemed pleased, which was more than I expected; for, between you and me,
Madam

Madam, our friends the French have seldom eyes for anything they have not been used to see all their lives. I beg my warmest compliments to your host and Lord Ilchester. I wish your Ladyship all pleasure and health, and am, notwithstanding my idleness,

Your most faithful and devoted humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

52. To George Montagu

[*Ætæt 47*]

Strawberry Hill

July 28, 1765

The less one is disposed, if one has any sense, to talk of oneself to people that inquire only out of compliment, and do not listen to the answer, the more satisfaction one feels in indulging a self-complacency, by sighing to those that really sympathize with our griefs. Do not think it is pain that makes me give this low-spirited air to my letter. No, it is the prospect of what is to come, not the sensation of what is passing, that affects me. The loss of youth is melancholy enough; but to enter into old age through the gate of infirmity most disheartening. My health and spirits make me take but slight notice of the transition, and, under the persuasion of temperance being a talisman, I marched boldly on towards the descent of the hill, knowing I must fall at last, but not suspecting that I should stumble by the way. This confession explains the mortification I feel. A month's confinement to one who never kept his bed a day, is a stinging lesson, and has humbled my
insolence

insolence to almost indifference. Judge, then, how little I interest myself about public events. I know nothing of them since I came hither, where I had not only the disappointment of not growing better, but a bad return in one of my feet, so that I am still wrapped up and upon a couch. It was the more unlucky as Lord Hertford is come to England for a very few days. He has offered to come to me; but as I then should see him only for some minutes, I propose being carried to town to-morrow. It will be so long before I can expect to be able to travel, that my French journey will certainly not take place so soon as I intended; and if Lord Hertford goes to Ireland, I shall still be more fluctuating; for though the Duke and Duchess of Richmond will replace them at Paris, and are as eager to have me with them, I have had so many more years heaped upon me within this month, that I have not the conscience to trouble young people, when I can no longer be as juvenile as they are. Indeed I shall think myself decrepit, till I again saunter into the garden in my slippers and without my hat in all weathers, a point I am determined to regain, if possible; for even this experience cannot make me resign my temperance and my hardiness. I am tired of the world, its politics, its pursuits, and its pleasures; but it will cost me some struggles before I submit to be tender and careful. Christ! can I ever stoop to the regimen of old age? I do not wish to dress up a withered person, nor drag it about to public places; but to sit in one's room, clothed warmly, expecting visits from folks I don't wish to see, and tended and flattered by relations impatient for one's death! let the gout do its worst as expeditiously

peditionously as it can: it would be more welcome in my stomach than in my limbs. I am not made to bear a course of nonsense and advice; but must play the fool in my own way to the last, alone with all my heart, if I cannot be with the very few I wish to see: but, to depend for comfort on others, who would be no comfort to me; this surely is not a state to be preferred to death: and nobody can have truly enjoyed the advantages of youth, health, and spirits, who is content to exist without the two last, which alone bear any resemblance to the first.

You see how difficult it is to conquer my proud spirit: low and weak as I am, I think my resolution and perseverance will get the better, and that I shall still be a gay shadow: at least, I will impose any severity upon myself, rather than humour the gout, and sink into that indulgence with which most people treat it. Bodily liberty is as dear to me as mental, and I would as soon flatter any other tyrant as the gout, my Whiggism extending as much to my health as to my principles, and being as willing to part with life, when I cannot preserve it, as your uncle Algernon when his freedom was at stake! Adieu!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

53. *To John Chute*

[Aetat 47]

Paris

Oct. 3, 1765

I don't know where you are, nor when I am likely to hear of you. I write at random, and, as I talk, the first thing that comes into my pen.

I am, as you certainly conclude, much more amused than pleased. At a certain time of life, sights and new objects may entertain one, but new people cannot find any place in one's affection. New faces with some name or other belonging to them catch my attention for a minute—I cannot say many preserve it. Five or six of the women that I have seen already are very sensible. The men are in general much inferior, and not even agreeable. They sent us their best, I believe, at first, the Duc de Nivernois. Their authors, who by the way are everywhere, are worse than their own writings, which I don't mean as a compliment to either. In general, the style of conversation is solemn, pedantic, and seldom animated, but by a dispute. I was expressing my aversion to disputes: Mr. Hume, who very gratefully admires the tone of Paris, having never known any other tone, said with great surprise, 'Why, what do you like, if you hate both disputes and whisk?'

What strikes me the most upon the whole is, the total difference of manners between them and us, from the greatest object to the least. There is not the smallest similitude in the twenty-four hours. It is obvious in every trifle. Servants carry their lady's train, and put her into her coach with their hat on. They walk about the streets in the rain with umbrellas to avoid putting on their hats; driving themselves in open chaises in the country without hats, in the rain, too, and yet often wear them in a chariot in Paris when it does not rain. The very footmen are powdered from the break of day, and yet wait behind their master, as I saw the Duc of Praslin's do, with a red pocket-handkerchief about their necks. Versailles,
like

like everything else, is a mixture of parade and poverty, and in every instance exhibits something most dissonant from our manners. In the colonnades, upon the staircases, nay, in the antechambers of the royal family, there are people selling all sorts of wares. While we were waiting in the Dauphin's sumptuous bedchamber, till his dressing-room door should be opened, two fellows were sweeping it, and dancing about in sabots to rub the floor.

You perceive that I have been presented. The Queen took great notice of me; none of the rest said a syllable. You are let into the King's bedchamber just as he has put on his shirt; he dresses and talks good-humouredly to a few, glares at strangers, goes to mass, to dinner, and a-hunting. The good old Queen, who is like Lady Primrose in the face, and Queen Caroline in the immensity of her cap, is at her dressing-table, attended by two or three old ladies, who are languishing to be in Abraham's bosom, as the only man's bosom to whom they can hope for admittance. Thence you go to the Dauphin, for all is done in an hour. He scarce stays a minute; indeed, poor creature, he is a ghost, and cannot possibly last three months. The Dauphiness is in her bedchamber, but dressed and standing; looks cross, is not civil, and has the true Westphalian grace and accents. The four Mesdames, who are clumsy plump old wenches, with a bad likeness to their father, stand in a bedchamber in a row, with black cloaks and knotting-bags, looking good-humoured, not knowing what to say, and wriggling as if they wanted to make water. This ceremony too is very short; then you are carried to the Dauphin's three
boys

boys, who you may be sure only bow and stare. The Duke of Berry looks weak and weak-eyed; the Count de Provence is a fine boy; the Count d'Artois¹ well enough. The whole concludes with seeing the Dauphin's little girl² dine, who is as round and as fat as a pudding.

In the Queen's antechamber we foreigners and the foreign ministers were shown the famous beast of the Gevaudan, just arrived, and covered with a cloth, which two chasseurs lifted up. It is an absolute wolf, but uncommonly large, and the expression of agony and fierceness remains strongly imprinted on its dead jaws.

I dined at the Duc of Praslin's with four-and-twenty ambassadors and envoys, who never go but on Tuesdays to court. He does the honours sadly, and I believe nothing else well, looking important and empty. The Duc de Choiseul's face, which is quite the reverse of gravity, does not promise much more. His wife is gentle, pretty, and very agreeable. The Duchess of Praslin, jolly, red-faced, looking very vulgar, and being very attentive and civil. I saw the Duc de Richelieu in waiting, who is pale, except his nose, which is red, much wrinkled, and exactly a remnant of that age which produced General Churchill, Wilks the player,³ the Duke of Argyll, &c. Adieu!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

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¹ Louis Auguste, Duc de Berry; Louis Stanislaus Xavier, Comte de Provence; Charles Philippe, Comte d'Artois; all of whom reigned, as Louis XVI, Louis XVIII and Charles X respectively.—T.

² Marie Adelaide Clotilde Xavière (d. 1802); m. (1775) Charles Emmanuel, Prince of Piedmont, afterwards King of Sardinia.—T.

³ Robert Wilks (d. 1732).—T.

54. To *Thōmās Gray*

[Aetat 48]

Paris

Jan. 25, 1766

I am much indebted to you for your kind letter and advice; and though it is late to thank you for it, it is at least a stronger proof that I do not forget it. However, I am a little obstinate, as you know, on the chapter of health, and have persisted through this Siberian winter in not adding a grain to my clothes, and in going open-breasted without an under waistcoat. In short, though I like extremely to live, it must be in my own way, as long as I can: it is not youth I court, but liberty; and I think making oneself tender is issuing a *general warrant* against one's own person. I suppose I shall submit to confinement when I cannot help it; but I am indifferent enough to life not to care if it ends soon after my prison begins.

I have not delayed so long to answer your letter, from not thinking of it, or from want of matter, but from want of time. I am constantly occupied, engaged, amused, till I cannot bring a hundredth part of what I have to say into the compass of a letter. You will lose nothing by this: you know my volubility, when I am full of new subjects; and I have at least many hours of conversation for you at my return. One does not learn a whole nation in four or five months; but, for the time, few, I believe, have seen, studied, or got so much acquainted with the French as I have.

By what I said of their religious or rather irreligious
opinions

opinions, you must not conclude their people of quality atheists—at least, not the men. Happily for them, poor souls! they are not capable of going so far into thinking. They assent to a great deal, because it is the fashion, and because they don't know how to contradict. They are ashamed to defend the Roman Catholic religion, because it is quite exploded; but I am convinced they believe it in their hearts. They hate the Parliaments and the philosophers, and are rejoiced that they may still idolize royalty. At present, too, they are a little triumphant: the court has shown a little spirit, and the Parliaments much less: but as the Duc de Choiseul, who is very fluttering, unsettled, and inclined to the philosophers, has made a compromise with the Parliament of Bretagne, the Parliaments might venture out again, if, as I fancy will be the case, they are not glad to drop a cause, of which they began to be a little weary of the inconveniences.

The generality of the men, and more than the generality, are dull and empty. They have taken up gravity, thinking it was philosophy and English, and so have acquired nothing in the room of their natural levity and cheerfulness. However, as their high opinion of their own country remains, for which they can no longer assign any reason, they are contemptuous and reserved, instead of being ridiculously, consequently pardonably, impertinent. I have wondered, knowing my own countrymen, that we had attained such a superiority. I wonder no longer, and have a little more respect for English *heads* than I had.

The women do not seem of the same country: if they are
less

less gay than they were, they ~~are~~ more informed, enough to make them very conversable. I know six or seven with very superior understandings; some of them with wit, or with softness, or very good sense.

Madame Geoffrin, of whom you have heard much, is an extraordinary woman, with more common sense than I almost ever met with. Great quickness in discovering characters, penetration in going to the bottom of them, and a pencil that never fails in a likeness—seldom a favourable one. She exacts and preserves, spite of her birth and their nonsensical prejudices about nobility, great court and attention. This she acquired by a thousand little arts and offices of friendship: and by a freedom and severity, which seem to be her sole end of drawing a concurrence to her; for she insists on scolding those she inveigles to her. She has little taste and less knowledge, but protects artisans and authors, and courts a few people to have the credit of serving her dependents. She was bred under the famous Madame Tencin, who advised her never to refuse any man; for, said her mistress, though nine in ten should not care a farthing for you, the tenth may live to be an useful friend. She did not adopt or reject the whole plan, but fully retained the purport of the maxim. In short, she is an epitome of empire, subsisting by rewards and punishments. Her great enemy, Madame du Deffand,¹ was for a short time mistress of

¹ Marie de Vichy Chamrond (1697-1780), Marquise du Deffand; she had been blind since 1752. Her *appartement* was in the Convent of St. Joseph in the Rue St. Dominique, where for thirty years she received the literary and aristocratic celebrities of her own and other nations. Walpole soon became Madame du Deffand's almost daily visitor while in Paris, and one of her warmest admirers. She repaid him by a devotion which has been well described as a 'tendresse exaltée . . . dont le vrai nom échappe, tant celui d'amitié serait faible et celui d'amour dérisoire.' Walpole's regard for

of the Regent, is now very old and stone-blind, but retains all her vivacity, wit, memory, judgement, passions, and agreeableness. She goes to operas, plays, suppers, and Versailles; gives suppers twice a week; has everything new read to her; makes new songs and epigrams, ay, admirably, and remembers every one that has been made these fourscore years. She corresponds with Voltaire, dictates charming letters to him, contradicts him, is no bigot to him or anybody, and laughs both at the clergy and the philosophers. In a dispute, into which she easily falls, she is very warm, and yet scarce ever in the wrong: her judgement on every subject is as just as possible; on every point of conduct as wrong as possible: for she is all love and hatred, passionate for her friends to enthusiasm, still anxious to be loved, I don't mean by lovers, and a vehement enemy, but openly. As she can have no amusement but conversation, the least solitude and *ennui* are insupportable to her, and put her into the power of several worthless people, who eat her suppers when they can eat nobody's of higher rank; wink to one another and laugh at her; hate her because she has forty times more parts—and venture to hate her because she is not rich. She has an old friend whom I must mention, a Monsieur Pont-deveyle, author of the *Fat Puni*, and the *Complaisant*, and of those pretty novels, the *Comte de Cominge*, the *Siege of Calais*, and

her, which was sincere and constant, was tempered by the fear that her excessive affection might make him ridiculous in the eyes of his friends. His subsequent visits to Paris were undertaken on her account. The correspondence between them, which began on his departure from Paris in 1766, lasted till the death of Madame du Deffand. Her letters to Horace Walpole were first published by Miss Berry in 1810. His letters to her, a number of which were returned to him during Madame du Deffand's lifetime, were largely used by Miss Berry in her notes. Most of the original letters have been destroyed.—T.

and *Les Malheurs de l'Amour*. 'Would not you expect this old man to be very agreeable? He can be so, but seldom is: yet he has another very different and very amusing talent, the art of parody, and is unique in his kind. He composes tales to the tunes of long dances: for instance, he has adapted the Regent's *Daphnis and Chloe* to one, and made it ten times more indecent; but it is so old, and sings it so well, that it is permitted in all companies. He has succeeded still better in *les caracteres de la danse*, to which he has adapted words that express all the characters of love. With all this he has not the least idea of cheerfulness in conversation; seldom speaks but on grave subjects, and not often on them; is a humourist, very supercilious, and wrapt up in admiration of his own country, as the only judge of his merit. His air and look are cold and forbidding; but ask him to sing, or praise his works, his eyes and smiles open and brighten up. In short, I can show him to you: the self-applauding poet in Hogarth's *Rake's Progress*, the second print, is so like his very features and very wig, that you would know him by it, if you came hither—for he certainly will not go to you.

Madame de Mirepoix's understanding is excellent of the useful kind, and can be so when she pleases of the agreeable kind. She has read, but seldom shows it, and has perfect taste. Her manner is cold, but very civil; and she conceals even the blood of Lorraine, without ever forgetting it. Nobody in France knows the world better, and nobody is personally so well with the King. She is false, artful, and insinuating beyond measure when it is her interest, but indolent and a coward.

She

She never had any passion but gaming, and always loses. For ever paying court, the sole produce of a life of art is to get money from the King to carry on a course of paying debts or contracting new ones, which she discharges as fast as she is able. She advertised devotion to get made *Dame du Palais* to the Queen; and the very next day this Princess of Lorraine was seen riding backwards with Madame Pompadour in the latter's coach. When the King was stabbed, and heartily frightened, the mistress took a panic too, and consulted D'Argenson, whether she had not best make off in time. He hated her, and said, By all means. Madame de Mirepoix advised her to stay. The King recovered his spirits, D'Argenson was banished, and la Maréchale inherited part of the mistress's credit.—I must interrupt my history of illustrious women with an anecdote of Monsieur de Maurepas, with whom I am much acquainted, and who has one of the few heads which approach to good ones, and who luckily for us was disgraced, and the marine dropped, because it was his favourite object and province. He employed Pontdeveyle to make a song on the Pompadour: it was clever and bitter, and did not spare even Majesty. This was Maurepas absurd enough to sing at supper at Versailles. Banishment ensued; and lest he should ever be restored, the mistress persuaded the King that he had poisoned her predecessor Madame de Châteauroux. Maurepas is very agreeable, and exceedingly cheerful; yet I have seen a transient silent cloud when politics are talked of.

Madame de Boufflers, who was in England, is a *savante*, mistress of the Prince of Conti, and very desirous of being his wife

wife. She is two women, the upper and the lower. I need not tell you that the lower is gallant, and still has pretensions. The upper is very sensible, too, and has a measured eloquence that is just and pleasing—but all is spoiled by an unrelaxed attention to applause. You would think she was always sitting for her picture to her biographer.

Madame de Rochfort is different from all the rest. Her understanding is just and delicate; with a finesse of wit that is the result of reflection. Her manner is soft and feminine, and though a *savante*, without any declared pretensions. She is the *decent* friend of Monsieur de Nivernois; for you must not believe a syllable of what you read in their novels. It requires the greatest curiosity, or the greatest habitude, to discover the smallest connection between the sexes here. No familiarity, but under the veil of friendship, is permitted, and Love's dictionary is as much prohibited, as at first sight one should think his ritual was. All you hear, and that pronounced with nonchalance, is, that *Monsieur un tel* has had *Madame une telle*.

The Duc de Nivernois has parts, and writes at the top of the mediocre, but, as Madame Geoffrin says, is *manqué partout*; *guerrier manqué*, *ambassadeur manqué*, *homme d'affaires manqué*, and *auteur manqué*—no, he is not *homme de naissance manqué*. He would think freely, but has some ambition of being governor to the Dauphin, and is more afraid of his wife and daughter, who are ecclesiastical *fagots*. The former out-chatters the Duke of Newcastle; and the latter, Madame de Gisors, exhausts Mr. Pitt's eloquence in defence of the Archbishop

bishop of Paris. Monsieur de Nivernois lives in a small circle of dependent admirers, and Madame de Rochfort is high-priestess for a small salary of credit.

The Duchess of Choiseul, the only young one of these heroines, is not very pretty, but has fine eyes, and is a little model in waxwork, which not being allowed to speak for some time as incapable, has a hesitation and modesty, the latter of which the court has not cured, and the former of which is atoned for by the most interesting sound of voice, and forgotten in the most elegant turn and propriety of expression. Oh, it is the gentlest, amiable, civil little creature that ever came out of a fairy egg! so just in its phrases and thoughts, so attentive and good-natured! Everybody loves it but its husband, who prefers his own sister, the Duchesse de Grammont, an Amazonian, fierce, haughty dame, who loves and hates arbitrarily, and is detested. Madame de Choiseul, passionately fond of her husband, was the martyr of this union, but at last submitted with a good grace; has gained a little credit with him, and is still believed to idolize him. But I doubt it—she takes too much pains to profess it.

I cannot finish my list without adding a much more common character—but more complete in its kind than any of the foregoing, the Maréchale de Luxembourg. She has been very handsome, very abandoned, and very mischievous. Her beauty is gone, her lovers are gone, and she thinks the devil is coming. This dejection has softened her into being rather agreeable, for she has wit and good breeding; but you would swear, by the restlessness of her person and the horrors she cannot conceal

ceal, that she had signed the compact, and expected to be called upon in a week for the performance.

I could add many pictures, but none so remarkable. In those I send you there is not a feature bestowed gratis or exaggerated. For the beauties, of which there are a few considerable, as Mesdames de Brionne, de Monaco, et d'Egmont, they have not yet lost their characters nor got any.

You must not attribute my intimacy with Paris to curiosity alone. An accident unlocked the doors for me. That *passe-partout* called the fashion, has made them fly open—and what do you think was that fashion?—I myself.—Yes, like Queen Eleanor in the ballad, I sunk at Charing Cross, and have risen in the Faubourg St. Germain. A *plaisanterie* on Rousseau, whose arrival here in his way to you brought me acquainted with many anecdotes conformable to the idea I had conceived of him, got about, was liked much more than it deserved, spread like wildfire, and made me the subject of conversation. Rousseau's devotees were offended. Madame de Boufflers, with a tone of sentiment, and the accents of lamenting humanity, abused me heartily, and then complained to myself with the utmost softness. I acted contrition, but had like to have spoiled all, by growing dreadfully tired of a second lecture from the Prince of Conti, who took up the ball, and made himself the hero of a history wherein he had nothing to do. I listened, did not understand half he said (nor he neither), forgot the rest, said Yes when I should have said No, yawned when I should have smiled, and was very penitent when I should have rejoiced at my pardon. Madame de Boufflers was more distressed

tressed, for he owned twenty times more than I had said: she frowned, and made him signs; but she had wound up his clack, and there was no stopping it. The moment she grew angry, the lord of the house grew charmed, and it has been my fault if I am not at the head of a numerous sect:—but, when I left a triumphant party in England, I did not come here to be at the head of a fashion. However, I have been sent for about like an African prince, or a learned canary-bird, and was, in particular, carried by force to the Princess of Talmond, the Queen's cousin, who lives in a charitable apartment in the Luxembourg, and was sitting on a small bed hung with saints and Sobieskis, in a corner of one of those vast chambers, by two blinking tapers. I stumbled over a cat, a footstool, and a chamber-pot in my journey to her presence. She could not find a syllable to say to me, and the visit ended with her begging a lap-dog. Thank the Lord! though this is the first month, it is the last week of my reign; and I shall resign my crown with great satisfaction to a *bouillie* of chestnuts, which is just invented, and whose annals will be illustrated by so many indigestions, that Paris will not want anything else these three weeks. I will enclose the fatal letter¹ after I have finished this enormous one; to which I will only add, that nothing has interrupted my Sévigné researches but the frost. The Abbé de Malesherbes has given me full power to ransack Livry. I did not tell you, that by great accident, when I thought on nothing less, I stumbled on an original picture of the Comte de

¹ The letter from the King of Prussia to Rousseau.—WALPOLE.

de Grammont. Adieu! You are generally in London in March; I shall be there by the end of it.

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

55. *To David Hume*

[Aetat 48]

Arlington Street

July 26, 1766

Dear Sir,—Your set of literary friends are what a set of literary men are apt to be, exceedingly absurd. They hold a consistory to consult how to argue with a madman; and they think it very necessary for your character to give them the pleasure of seeing Rousseau exposed, not because he has provoked you, but them. If Rousseau prints, you must; but I certainly would not till he does.¹

I cannot be precise as to the time of my writing the King of Prussia's letter; but I do assure you with the utmost truth that it was several days before you left Paris, and before Rousseau's arrival here, of which I can give you a strong proof; for I not only suppressed the letter while you stayed there, out of delicacy to you, but it was the reason why, out of delicacy to myself, I did not go to see him, as you often proposed to me, thinking it wrong to go and make a cordial visit to a man, with a letter in my pocket to laugh at him. You are
at

¹ Rousseau was at this time convinced that Hume was conspiring against him. He wrote abusive letters to Hume, in one of which he accused Hume of having assisted in the composition of the pretended letter from the King of Prussia, which was in fact written by Horace Walpole. Hume's literary friends in Paris wished him to publish a narrative of his dealings with Rousseau.—T. Hume did publish his dealing with Rousseau and Walpole, to his great disgust, was dragged into it.

at full liberty, dear Sir, to make use of what I say in your justification, either to Rousseau or anybody else. I should be very sorry to have you blamed on my account; I have a hearty contempt of Rousseau, and am perfectly indifferent what the litterati of Paris think of the matter. If there is any fault, which I am far from thinking, let it lie on me. No parts can hinder my laughing at their possessor, if he is a mountebank. If he has a bad and most ungrateful heart, as Rousseau has shown in your case, into the bargain, he will have my scorn likewise, as he will of all good and sensible men. You may trust your sentence to such, who are as respectable judges as any that have pored over ten thousand more volumes.

Yours most sincerely,

HOR. WALPOLE.

P. S. I will look out the letter and the dates as soon as I go to Strawberry Hill.

56. To Thomas Gray

[*Ætæt 50*]

Arlington Street

Feb. 18, 1768

You have sent me a long and very obliging letter, and yet I am extremely out of humour with you. I saw *Poems* by *Mr. Gray* advertised: I called directly at Dodsley's to know if this was to be more than a new edition? He was not at home himself, but his foreman told me he thought there were some new pieces, and notes to the whole. It was very unkind, not only to go out of town without mentioning them to me, with-
out

out showing them to me, but not to say a word of them in this letter.¹ Do you think I am indifferent, or not curious about what you write? I have ceased to ask you, because you have so long refused to show me anything. You could not suppose I thought that you never write. No; but I concluded you did not intend, at least yet, to publish what you had written. As you did intend it, I might have expected a month's preference. You will do me the justice to own that I had always rather have seen your writings than have shown you mine; which you know are the most hasty trifles in the world, and which, though I may be fond of the subject when fresh, I constantly forget in a very short time after they are published. This would sound like affectation to others, but will not to you. It would be affected, even to you, to say I am indifferent to fame. I certainly am not, but I am indifferent to almost anything I have done to acquire it. The greater part are mere compilations; and no wonder they are, as you say, incorrect, when they are commonly written with people in the room, as *Richard*² and the *Noble Authors* were. But I doubt there is a more intrinsic fault in them; which is, that I cannot correct them.

If

¹ 'To your friendly accusation, I am glad I can plead not guilty with a safe conscience. Dodsley told me in the spring that the plates from Mr. Bentley's designs were worn out, and he wanted to have them copied and reduced to a smaller scale for a new edition. I dissuaded him from so silly an expense, and desired he would put in no ornaments at all. The *Long Story* was to be totally omitted, as its only use (that of explaining the prints) was gone: but to supply the place of it in bulk, lest *my works* should be mistaken for the works of a flea, or a pismire, I promised to send him an equal weight of poetry or prose: so since my return hither, I put up about two ounces of stuff; viz. *The Fatal Sisters*, *The Descent of Odin* (of both which you have copies), a bit of something from the Welsh, and certain little notes, partly from justice (to acknowledge the debt, where I had borrowed anything), partly from ill-temper, just to tell the gentle reader that Edward I was not Oliver Cromwell, nor Queen Elizabeth the Witch of Endor. This is literally all; and with all this I shall be but a shrimp of an author.' Gray to Walpole, Feb. 25, 1768.—T.

² Walpole has just published his *Historic Doubts on Richard III.*

If I write tolerably, it must be at once; I can neither mend nor add. The articles of Lord Capel and Lord Peterborough, in the second edition of the *Noble Authors*, cost me more trouble than all the rest together: and you may perceive that the worst part of *Richard*, in point of ease and style, is what relates to the papers you gave me on Jane Shore, because it was tacked on so long afterwards, and when my impetus was chilled. If some time or other you will take the trouble of pointing out the inaccuracies of it, I shall be much obliged to you: at present I shall meddle no more with it. It has taken its fate: nor did I mean to complain. I found it was condemned indeed beforehand, which was what I alluded to. Since publication (as has happened to me before) the success has gone beyond my expectation.

Not only at Cambridge, but here, there have been people wise enough to think me too free with the King of Prussia! A newspaper has talked of my known inveteracy to him. Truly, I love him as well as I do most kings. The greater offence is my reflection on Lord Clarendon. It is forgotten that I had overpraised him before. Pray turn to the new State Papers, from which, *it is said*, he composed his History. You will find they are the papers from which he did *not* compose his History. And yet I admire my Lord Clarendon more than these pretended admirers do. But I do not intend to justify myself. I can as little satisfy those who complain that I do not let them know what *really did* happen. If this inquiry can ferret out any truth, I shall be glad. I have picked up a few more circumstances. I now want to know what Perkin Warbeck's proclamation

proclamation was, which Speed in his History says is preserved by Bishop Leslie. If you look in Speed perhaps you will be able to assist me.

The Duke of Richmond and Lord Lyttelton agree with you, that I have not disculpated Richard of the murder of Henry VI. I own to you, it is the crime of which in my own mind I believe him most guiltless. Had I thought he committed it, I should never have taken the trouble to apologize for the rest. I am not at all positive or obstinate on your other objections, nor know exactly what I believe on many points of this story. And I am so sincere, that, except a few notes hereafter, I shall leave the matter to be settled or discussed by others. As you have written much too little, I have written a great deal too much, and think only of finishing the two or three other things I have begun—and of those, nothing but the last volume of *Painters* is designed for the present public. What has one to do when turned fifty, but really think of *finishing*?

I am much obliged and flattered by Mr. Mason's approbation, and particularly by having had almost the same thought with him. I said, 'People need not be angry at my excusing Richard; I have not diminished their fund of hatred, I have only transferred it from Richard to Henry.' Well, but I have found you close with Mason—No doubt, cry prating I, something will come out.¹—Oh no—leave us, both of you, to

Amabellas

¹ 'I found him close with Swift—

Indeed?—No doubt,
(Cries prating Balbus) something
will come out.'

Pope's *Epistle to Arbuthnot*—WALPOLE.

*Amabellas*² and *Epistles to Ferney*,³ that give Voltaire an account of his own tragedies, to Macarony fables that are more unintelligible than Pilpay's are in the original, to Mr. Thornton's hurdy-gurdy poetry, and to Mr.——, who has imitated himself worse than any fop in a magazine would have done. In truth, if you should abandon us, I could not wonder.—When Garrick's prologues and epilogues, his own *Cymons* and farces, and the comedies of the fools that pay court to him, are the delight of the age, it does not deserve anything better.

Pray read the new *Account of Corsica*.⁴ What relates to Paoli⁵ will amuse you much. There is a deal about the island and its divisions that one does not care a straw for. The author, Boswell, is a strange being, and, like Cambridge, has a rage of knowing anybody that ever was talked of. He forced himself upon me at Paris in spite of my teeth and my doors, and I see has given a foolish account of all he could pick up from me about King Theodore. He then took an antipathy to me on Rousseau's account, abused me in the newspapers, and exhorted Rousseau to do so too: but as he came to see me no more, I forgave all the rest. I see he now is a little sick of Rousseau himself; but I hope it will not cure him of his anger to me. However, his book will, I am sure, entertain you.

I will add but a word or two more. I am criticized for the expression *tinker up* in the preface. Is this one of those that you object to? I own I think such a low expression, placed to
ridicule

² *Amabella*, a poem by Edward Jerningham (1727-1812).—T.

³ *Ferney, an Epistle to M. de Voltaire*, by George Keate (1729-1797).—T.

⁴ *Account of Corsica*, by James Boswell (1740-1795).—T.

⁵ Paschal Paoli (1725-1807), leader of the Corsicans in their struggles for independence.—T.

ridicule an absurd instance of wise folly, very forcible. Replace it with an elevated word or phrase, and to my conception it becomes as flat as possible.

George Selwyn says I may, if I please, write Historic Doubts on the present Duke of G. too. Indeed, they would be doubts, for I know nothing certainly.¹

Will you be so kind as to look into Leslie *De Rebus Scotorum*, and see if Perkin's proclamation is there, and if there, how authenticated? You will find in Speed my reason for asking this. I have written in such a hurry, I believe you will scarce be able to read my letter—and as I have just been writing French, perhaps the sense may not be clearer than the writing. Adieu!

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

57. *To Sir Horace Mann*

[Aetat 50]

Arlington Street

Thursday, March 31, 1768

I have received your letter, with the extract of that from Mr. Mackenzie. You know it was not agreeable to my opinion that you should hear of the new promise, because when it is not immediately executed, I look upon it as little preferable
to

¹ Horace Walpole alludes here to the relations of his niece, the Dowager Countess Waldegrave, with the Duke of Gloucester, brother of George III. Lady Waldegrave had in fact been privately married to the Duke on Sept. 6, 1766, but by the Duke's desire, the marriage was not publicly acknowledged until 1772. When the Duke first distinguished Lady Waldegrave by his attentions, Horace Walpole expressed to his niece his strong disapproval of the connection. This, and his refusal to meet the Duke, caused a breach of Walpole's friendship with Lady Waldegrave until after the public announcement of her marriage.—T.

to an old one, and because I thought it would be raising the quicksilver of your impatience unnecessarily. I do not think any honours will be bestowed yet. The peerages are all postponed to an indefinite time. If you are in a violent hurry, you may petition the ghosts of your neighbors—Masaniello and the Gracchi. The spirit of one of them walks here; nay, I saw it go by my window yesterday, at noon, in a hackney chair.

Friday

I was interrupted yesterday. The ghost is laid for a time in a red sea of port and claret. This spectre is the famous Wilkes. He appeared the moment the Parliament was dissolved. The ministry despised him. He stood for the City of London, and was the last on the poll of seven candidates, none but the mob, and most of them without votes, favouring him. He then offered himself to the county of Middlesex. The election came on last Monday. By five in the morning a very large body of weavers, &c., took possession of Piccadilly, and the roads and turnpikes leading to Brentford, and would suffer nobody to pass without blue cockades, and papers inscribed '*No. 45, Wilkes and Liberty.*' They tore to pieces the coaches of Sir W. Beauchamp Proctor, and Mr. Cooke, the other candidates, though the latter was not there, but in bed with the gout, and it was with difficulty that Sir William and Mr. Cooke's cousin got to Brentford. There, however, lest it should be declared a void election, Wilkes had the sense to keep everything quiet. But, about five, Wilkes being considerably ahead of the other two, his mob returned to town
and

and behaved outrageously. They stopped every carriage, scratched and spoilt several with writing 'No. 45,' pelted, threw dirt and stones, and forced everybody to huzza for Wilkes. I did but cross Piccadilly at eight, in my coach with a French Monsieur d'Angeul, whom I was carrying to Lady Hertford's; they stopped us, and bid us huzza. I desired him to let down the glass on his side, but, as he was not alert, they broke it to shatters. At night they insisted, in several streets, on houses being illuminated, and several Scotch refusing, had their windows broken. Another mob rose in the City, and Harley, the present mayor, being another Sir William Walworth, and having acted formerly and now with great spirit against Wilkes, and the Mansion House not being illuminated, and he out of town, they broke every window, and tried to force their way into the house. The trained bands were sent for, but did not suffice. At last a party of Guards from the Tower, and some lights erected, dispersed the tumult. At one in the morning a riot began before Lord Bute's house, in Audley Street, though illuminated. They flung two large flints into Lady Bute's chamber, who was in bed, and broke every window in the house. Next morning, Wilkes and Cooke were returned members. The day was very quiet, but at night they rose again, and obliged almost every house in town to be lighted up, even the Duke of Cumberland's and Princess Amelia's. About one o'clock they marched to the Duchess of Hamilton's in Argyll Buildings (Lord Lorn¹ being in Scotland). She was obstinate, and

¹ John Campbell, Lord Lorn, eldest son of John, Duke of Argyll, and second husband of the celebrated beauty, Elizabeth Gunning, Duchess Dowager of Hamilton.—WALPOLE.

and would not illuminate, though with child, and, as they hope, of an heir to the family, and with the Duke, her son,² and the rest of her children in the house. There is a small court and parapet wall before the house: they brought iron crows, tore down the gates, pulled up the pavement, and battered the house for three hours. They could not find the key of the back door, nor send for any assistance. The night before, they had obliged the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland to give them beer, and appear at the windows, and drink 'Wilkes's health.' They stopped and opened the coach of Count Seilern, the Austrian ambassador, who has made a formal complaint, on which the Council met on Wednesday night, and were going to issue a proclamation, but hearing all was quiet, and that only a few houses were illuminated in Leicester Fields from the terror of the inhabitants, a few constables were sent with orders to extinguish the lights, and not the smallest disorder has happened since. In short, it has ended like other election riots, and with not a quarter of the mischief that has been done in some other towns.

There are, however, difficulties to come. Wilkes has notified that he intends to surrender himself to his outlawry, the beginning of next term, which comes on the 17th of this month. There is said to be a flaw in the proceedings, in which case his election will be good, though the King's Bench may fine or imprison him on his former sentence. In my own opinion, the House of Commons is the place where he can do the least hurt, for he is a wretched speaker, and will sink to contempt, like
Admiral

² Duke of Hamilton, her son by her first husband.—WALPOLE.

Admiral Vernon, who I remember just such an illuminated hero, with two birthdays in one year. You will say, he can write better than Vernon—true; and therefore his case is more desperate. Besides, Vernon was rich: Wilkes is undone; and though he has had great support, his patrons will be sick of maintaining him. He must either sink to poverty and a jail, or commit new excesses, for which he will get knocked on the head. The Scotch are his implacable enemies to a man. A Rienzi¹ cannot stop: their histories are summed up in two words—a triumph and an assassination.

I must finish, for Lord Hertford is this moment come in, and insists on my dining with the Prince of Monaco, who is come over to thank the King for the presents his Majesty sent him on his kindness and attention to the late Duke of York. You shall hear the suite of the above histories, which I sit quietly and look at, having nothing more to do with the storm, and sick of politics, but as a spectator, while they pass over the stage of the world. Adieu!

58. *To George Montagu*

[Aetat 50]

Strawberry Hill

April 15, 1768

Mr. Chute tells me that you have taken a new house in Squireland, and have given yourself up for two years more to port and parsons. I am very angry, and resign you to the works of the devil or the Church, I don't care which. You will

¹ Nicolo Rienzi, a famous demagogue at Rome.—WALPOLE.

will get the gout, turn Methodist, and expect to ride to heaven upon your own great toe. I was happy with your telling me how well you love me, and though I don't love loving, I could have poured out all the fullness of my heart to such an old and true friend—but what am I the better for it, if I am to see you but two or three days in the year? I thought you would at last come and while away the remainder of life on the banks of the Thames in gaiety and old tales. I have quitted the stage, and the Clive is preparing to leave it.¹ We shall neither of us ever be grave: dowagers roost all around us, and you could never want cards or mirth. Will you end like a fat farmer, repeating annually the price of oats, and discussing stale newspapers? There have you got, I hear, into an old gallery, that has not been glazed since Queen Elizabeth, and under the nose of an infant Duke and Duchess,² that will understand you no more than if you wore a ruff and a coif, and talk to them of a call of serjeants the year of the Spanish Armada! Your wit and humour will be as much lost upon them, as if you talked the dialect of Chaucer: for with all the divinity of wit, it grows out of fashion like a fardingale. I am convinced that the young men at White's already laugh at George Selwyn's *bons mots* only by tradition. I avoid talking before the youth of the age as I would dancing before them; for if one's tongue don't move in the steps of the day, and thinks to please by its old graces, it is only an object of ridicule, like Mrs. Hobart in her cotillon. I tell you we should get together, and

¹ Mrs. Clive retired in April 1769.—T.

² The Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch, who had a seat at Adderbury in Oxfordshire.—T.

and comfort ourselves with reflecting on the brave days that we have known—not that I think people were a jot more clever or wise in our youth than they are now; but as my system is always to live in a vision as much as I can, and as visions don't increase with years, there is nothing so natural as to think one remembers what one does not remember.

I have finished my tragedy,¹ but as you would not bear the subject, I will say no more of it, but that Mr. Chute, who is not easily pleased, likes it, and Gray, who is still more difficult, approves it. I am not yet intoxicated enough with it to think it would do for the stage, though I wish to see it acted; but as Mrs. Pritchard leaves the stage next month, I know nobody could play the Countess; nor am I disposed to expose myself to the impertinences of that jackanapes Garrick, who lets nothing appear but his own wretched stuff, or that of creatures still duller, who suffer him to alter their pieces as he pleases. I have written an epilogue *in character* for the Clive, which she would speak admirably—but I am not so sure that she would like to speak it. Mr. Conway, Lady Ailesbury, Lady Lyttelton, and Miss Rich, are to come hither the day after to-morrow, and Mr. Conway and I are to read my play to them; for I have not strength enough to go through the whole alone.

My press is revived, and is printing a French play² written by the old Président Hénault. It was damned many years ago at Paris, and yet I think is better than some that have succeeded, and much better than any of *our* modern tragedies. I print
it

¹ *The Mysterious Mother*, of which fifty copies were printed at Strawberry Hill.—T.

² *Cornélie, Vestale: tragédie*.—T.

it to please the old man, as he was exceedingly kind to me at Paris; but I doubt whether he will live till it is finished. He is to have a hundred copies, and there are to be but an hundred more, of which you shall have one.

Adieu! though I am very angry with you, I deserve all your friendship, by that I have for you, witness my anger and disappointment.

Yours ever,

H. W.

P. S. Send me your new direction, and tell me when I must begin to use it.

59. *To George Montagu*

[*Ætæt 50*]

Strawberry Hill

June 15, 1768

No, I cannot be so false as to say I am glad you are pleased with your situation. You are so apt to take root, that it requires ten years to dig you out again when you once begin to settle. As you go pitching your tent up and down, I wish you was still more a Tartar, and shifted your quarters perpetually. Yes, I *will* come and see you; but tell me first, when do your Duke and Duchess¹ travel to the north? I know he is a very amiable lad, and I do not know that she is not as amiable a laddess, but I had rather see their house comfortably when they are not there.

I perceive the deluge fell upon you before it reached us.

It

¹ Of Buccleuch.—T.

It began here but on Monday ~~last~~, and then rained near eight-and-forty hours without intermission. My poor hay has not a dry thread to its back. I have had a fire these three days. In short, every summer one lives in a state of mutiny and murmur, and I have found the reason. It is because we will affect to have a summer, and we have no title to any such thing. Our poets learnt their trade of the Romans, and so adopted the terms of their masters. They talk of shady groves, purling streams, and cooling breezes, and we get sore throats and agues with attempting to realize these visions. Master Damon writes a song, and invites Miss Chloe to enjoy the cool of the evening, and the deuce a bit have we of any such thing as a cool evening. Zephyr is a north-east wind, that makes Damon button up to the chin, and pinches Chloe's nose till it is red and blue; and then they cry, 'This is a bad summer'—as if we ever had any other! The best sun we have is made of Newcastle coal, and I am determined never to reckon upon any other. We ruin ourselves with inviting over foreign trees, and make our houses clamber up hills to look at prospects. How our ancestors would laugh at us, who knew there was no being comfortable, unless you had a high hill before your nose, and a thick warm wood at your back! Taste is too freezing a commodity for us, and, depend upon it, will go out of fashion again.

There is indeed a natural warmth in this country, which, as you say, I am very glad not to enjoy any longer—I mean the hot-house in St. Stephen's Chapel. My own sagacity makes me very vain, though there was very little merit in it. I had seen so much of all parties, that I had little esteem left for
any

any; it is most indifferent to me who is in or who is out, or which is set in the pillory, Mr. Wilkes or my Lord Mansfield. I see the country going to ruin, and no man with brains enough to save it. That is mortifying; but what signifies who has the undoing it? I seldom suffer myself to think on this subject: my patriotism could do no good, and my philosophy can make me be at peace.

I am sorry you are likely to lose your poor cousin Lady Hinchinbrook¹: I heard a very bad account of her when I was last in town. Your letter to Madame Roland shall be taken care of—but as you are so scrupulous of making me pay postage, I must remember not to overcharge you, as I can frank my idle letters no longer—therefore, good night.

Yours ever,

H. W.

60. *To the Earl of Strafford*

[Ætæt 51]

Strawberry Hill

Monday, Oct. 10, 1768

I give you a thousand thanks, my dear Lord, for the account of the ball at Welbeck. I shall not be able to repay it with a relation of the masquerade to-night; for I have been confined here this week with the gout in my feet, and have not stirred off my bed or couch since Tuesday. I was to have gone to the great ball at Sion¹ on Friday, for which a new road, paddock, and bridge were made, as other folks make a dessert. I conclude

¹ She died July 1768.—T.

¹ The villa of the Duke of Northumberland near Brentford.—WALPOLE.

clude Lady Mary² has, and will tell you of all these pomps, which health thinks so serious, and sickness with her grave face tells one are so idle. Sickness may make me moralize, but I assure you she does not want humour. She has diverted me extremely with drawing a comparison between the repose (to call neglect by its dignified name) which I have enjoyed in this fit, and the great anxiety in which the whole world was when I had the last gout, three years ago—you remember my friends were then coming into power. Lord Weymouth was so good as to call at least once every day, and inquire after me; and the foreign ministers insisted that I should give them the satisfaction of seeing me, that they might tranquillize their sovereigns with the certainty of my not being in any danger. The Duke and Duchess of Newcastle were so kind, though very nervous themselves, as to send messengers and long messages every day from Claremont. I cannot say this fit has alarmed Europe quite so much. I heard the bell ring at the gate, and asked with much majesty if it was the Duke of Newcastle had sent? ‘No, Sir, it was only the butcher’s boy.’ The butcher’s boy is, indeed, the only courier I have had. Neither the King of France nor the King of Spain appears to be under the least concern about me.

My dear Lord, I have had so many of these transitions in my life, that you will not wonder they divert me more than a masquerade. I am ready to say to most people, ‘Mask, I know you.’ I wish I might choose their dresses!

When I have the honour of seeing Lady Strafford, I shall beseech

² Lady Mary Coke, sister to Lady Strafford.—WALPOLE.

beseech her to tell me all the news; for I am too nigh and too far to know any. Adieu, my dear Lord!

Yours most sincerely,

HOR. WALPOLE.

61. To Thomas Chatterton¹

[Ætæt 51]

Arlington Street

March 28, 1769

Sir,—I cannot but think myself singularly obliged by a gentleman with whom I have not the pleasure of being acquainted, when I read your very curious and kind letter, which I have this minute received. I give you a thousand thanks for it, and for the very obliging offer you make me, of communicating your MSS. to me. What you have already sent me is very valuable, and full of information; but instead of correcting you, Sir, you are far more able to correct me. I have not the happiness of understanding the Saxon language, and without your learned notes should not have been able to comprehend Rowley's text.

As a second edition of my *Anecdotes* was published but last year, I must not flatter myself that a third will be wanted soon; but I shall be happy to lay up any notices you will be so good

as

¹ Thomas Chatterton (1752-1770) the poet, then sixteen years old. He wrote to Horace Walpole in March 1769, under cover to Bathoe, Walpole's bookseller. 'Bathoe . . . brought me a packet left with him. It contained an Ode, or little poem of two or three stanzas in alternate rhyme, on the death of Richard the 1st, and I was told in a very few lines that it had been found at Bristol with many other old poems; and that the possessor could furnish me with accounts of a series of great painters that had flourished at Bristol.' (See *Letter to the Editor of the Miscellanies of Thomas Chatterton*, *Works of Lord Orford*, vol. iv. p. 220.)—T.

as to extract for me, and send me at your leisure; for, as it is uncertain when I may use them, I would by no means borrow and detain your MSS.

Give me leave to ask you where Rowley's poems are to be found? I should not be sorry to print them; or at least, a specimen of them, if they have never been printed.

The Abbot John's verses that you have given me, are wonderful for their harmony and spirit, though there are some words I do not understand.

You do not point out exactly the time when he lived, which I wish to know, as I suppose it was long before John Ab Eyck's discovery of oil-painting. If so, it confirms what I had guessed, and have hinted in my *Anecdotes*, that oil-painting was known here much earlier than that discovery or revival.

I will not trouble you with more questions now, Sir, but flatter myself from the humanity and politeness you have already shown me, that you will sometimes give me leave to consult you. I hope, too, you will forgive the simplicity of my direction, as you have favoured me with no other.

I am, Sir,

Your much obliged and obedient humble Servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.¹

P. S. Be so good as to direct to Mr. Walpole in Arlington Street.

You

¹ The following note, dated Berkeley Square, March 16, 1792, is printed in *Works of Lord Orford* (vol. iv. p. 239:—'A letter from me to Chatterton, dated March 28, 1769, appeared in the *European Magazine* for the past month of February. I believe it is a genuine one, and the first which I wrote to him on his first application to me: though, not having seen the original now, nor since it was written, nor having kept any copy of it, I cannot at the distance of so many years say more than that I do believe it was genuine.'—T.

62. To George Montagu

[Ætæt 51]

Arlington Street

May 11, 1769

You are so wayward, that I often resolve to give you up to your humours. Then something happens with which I can divert you, and my good nature returns. Did not you say you should return to London long before this time? At least, could you not tell me you had changed your mind? why am I to pick it out from your absence and silence, as Dr. Warburton found a future state in Moses's saying nothing of the matter? I could go on with a chapter of severe interrogatories; but I think it more cruel to treat you as a hopeless reprobate—yes, you are graceless, and as I have a respect for my own scolding, I shall not throw it away upon you.

Strawberry has been in great glory—I have given a *festino* there that will almost mortgage it. Last Tuesday all France dined there: Monsieur and Madame du Châtelet, the Duc de Liancour, three more French ladies, whose names you will find in the enclosed paper, eight other Frenchmen, the Spanish and Portuguese ministers, the Holdernesses, Fitzroys, in short we were four-and-twenty. They arrived at two. At the gates of the castle I received them, dressed in the cravat of Gibbons's carving, and a pair of gloves embroidered up to the elbows that had belonged to James I. The French servants stared, and firmly believed this was the dress of English country gentlemen. After taking a survey of the apartments, we went to
the

the printing-house, where I had prepared the enclosed verses, with translations by Monsieur de Lisle,¹ one of the company. The moment they were printed off, I gave a private signal, and French horns and clarionets accompanied the compliment. We then went to see Pope's grotto and garden, and returned to a magnificent dinner in the refectory. In the evening we walked, had tea, coffee, and lemonade in the gallery, which was illuminated with a thousand, or thirty candles, I forget which, and played at whisk and loo till midnight. Then there was a cold supper, and at one the company returned to town, saluted by fifty nightingales, who, as tenants of the manor, came to do honour to their lord.

I cannot say last night was equally agreeable. There was what they called a *ridotto al fresco* at Vauxhall, for which one paid half a guinea, though, except some thousand more lamps and a covered passage all round the garden, which took off from the gardenhood, there was nothing better than on a common night. Mr. Conway and I set out from his house at eight o'clock—the tide and torrent of coaches was so prodigious, that it was half an hour after nine before we got halfway from Westminster Bridge. We then alighted, and after scrambling under bellies of horses, through wheels, and over posts and rails, we reached the gardens, where were already many thousand persons. Nothing diverted me but a man in a Turk's dress and two nymphs in masquerade without masks, who sailed amongst the company, and, which was surprising, seemed to surprise nobody. It had been given out that people

were

¹ The Chevalier de Lille, an officer of dragoons, and a writer of *vers de société*.—T.

were desired to come in fancied dresses without masks. We walked twice round and were rejoiced to come away, though with the same difficulties as at our entrance; for we found three strings of coaches all along the road, who did not move half a foot in half an hour. There is to be a rival mob in the same way at Ranelagh to-morrow; for the greater the folly and imposition the greater is the crowd. I have suspended the *vestimenta* that were torn off my back to the god of repentance, and shall stay away. Adieu! I have not a word more to say to you.

Yours, &c.,

H. W.

P. S. I hope you will not regret paying a shilling for this packet.

63. *To the Rev. William Cole*

[Ætæt 51]

Strawberry Hill

June 14, 1769

Dear Sir,—Among many agreeable passages in your last, there is nothing I like so well as the hope you give me of seeing you here in July. I will return that visit immediately—don't be afraid, I do not mean to incommode you at Waterbeach, but, if you will come, I promise I will accompany you back as far as Cambridge; nay, carry you on to Ely, for thither I am bound. The Bishop has sent a Dr. Nichols to me, to desire I would assist him in a plan for the east window of his cathedral, which he intends to *benefactorate* with painted glass. The
window

window is the most untractable of all Saxon uncouthnesses; nor can I conceive what to do with it, but by taking off the bottoms for arms and mosaic, splitting the Crucifixion into three compartments, and filling the five lights at top with prophets, saints, martyrs, or such like, after shortening the windows like the great ones. This I shall propose; however, I choose to see the spot myself, as it will be a proper attention to the Bishop after his civility; and I really would give the best advice I could. The Bishop, like Alexander VIII, feels that the clock has struck half an hour past eleven, and is impatient to be let depart in peace after his eyes shall have seen his vitrification; at least, he is impatient to give his eyes that treat—and yet it will be a pity to precipitate the work. If you can come to me first, I shall be happy; if not, I must come to you, that is, will meet you at Cambridge. Let me know your mind, for I would not press you unseasonably. I am enough obliged to you already, though, by mistake, you think it is you that are obliged to me. I do not mean to plunder you of any more prints; but shall employ a little collector to get me all that are *getable*; the rest, the greatest collectors of us all must want.

I am very sorry for the fever you have had; but, Goodman Frog, if you will live in the fens, do you expect to be as healthy as if you were a fat Dominican at Naples? You and your MSS. will all grow mouldy. When our climate is subject to no sign but Aquarius and Pisces, would one choose the dampest county under the heavens? I do not expect to persuade you, and so I will say no more. I wish you joy of the treasure you have
discovered

discovered. Six Saxon bishops and a Duke of Northumberland! ¹ You have had fine sport this season. Thank you much for wishing to see my name on a plate in the History—but, seriously, I have no such vanity. I did my utmost to dissuade Mr. Granger from the Dedication,² and took especial pains to get my *virtues* left out of the question, till I found he would be quite hurt if I did not let him express his gratitude, as he called it; so to satisfy him, I was forced to accept of his *present*, for I doubt I have few virtues but what he has presented me with; and in a dedication, you know one is permitted to have as many as the author can afford to bestow. I really have another objection to the plate, which is, the ten guineas. I have so many drafts on my extravagance for trifles that I like better than vanity, that I should not care to be at that expense. But I should think either the Duke or Duchess of Northumberland would rejoice at such opportunity of buying incense—and I will tell you what you shall do. Write to Mr. Percy, and vaunt the discovery of Duke Brythnoth's bones, and ask him to move their Graces to contribute a plate. They could not be so unnatural as to refuse—especially if the Duchess knew the size of his thigh-bone.

I was very happy to show civilities to your friends, and should have asked them to stay and dine, but unluckily expected other company. Dr. Ewin seems a very good sort of man, and Mr. Rawlinson a very agreeable one. Pray do not think it was any trouble to me to pay respect to your recommendation.

I

¹ Their remains were discovered by Cole during some alterations in Ely Cathedral.—T.

² Granger's *Biographical History* was dedicated to Horace Walpole.—T.

I have been eagerly reading Mr. Shenstone's¹ *Letters*, which, though containing nothing but trifles, amused me extremely, as they mention so many persons I know, particularly myself. I found there, what I did not know, and what I believe Mr. Gray himself never knew, that his Ode on my cat was written to ridicule Lord Lyttelton's Monody. It is just as true, as that the latter will survive, and the former be forgotten. There is another anecdote equally vulgar, and void of truth: that my father, *sitting in George's Coffee-House* (I suppose Mr. Shenstone thought that, after he quitted his place, he went to coffee-houses to learn news), was asked to contribute to a figure of himself that was to be beheaded by the mob. I do remember something like it, but it happened to myself. I met a mob, just after my father was out, in Hanover Square, and drove up to it to know what was the matter. They were carrying about a figure of my sister. This probably gave rise to the other story. That on my uncle I never heard, but it is a good story, and not at all improbable. I felt great pity on reading these letters for the narrow circumstances of the author, and the passion for fame that he was tormented with; and yet he had much more fame than his talents entitled him to. Poor man! he wanted to have all the world talk of him for the pretty place² he had made, and which he seems to have made only that it might be talked of. The first time a company came to see my house, I felt his joy. I am now so tired of it, that I shudder when the bell rings at the gate. It is

¹ William Shenstone (1714-1763).

² The Leasowes.—T.

is as bad as keeping an inn, and I am often tempted to deny its being shown, if it would not be ill-natured to those that come, and to my housekeeper. I own, I was one day too cross. I had been plagued all the week with staring crowds. At last it rained a deluge. 'Well!' said I, 'at least nobody will come to-day.' The words were scarce uttered, before the bell rang, a company desired to see the house—I replied, 'Tell them they cannot possibly see the house, but they are very welcome to walk in the garden.'

Observe; nothing above alludes to Dr. Ewin and Mr. Rawlinson; I was not only much pleased with them, but quite glad to show them how entirely you command my house, and your most sincere friend and servant

HOR. WALPOLE.

64. *To Thomas Chatterton*

[*Ætæt 51*]

[*August, 1769*]

Sir,—I do not see, I must own, how those precious MSS., of which you have sent me a few extracts, should be lost to the world by my detaining your letters. Do the originals not exist, from whence you say you copied your extracts, and from which you offered me more extracts? In truth, by your first letter I understood that the originals themselves were in your possession by the free and voluntary offer you made me of them, and which you know I did not choose to accept. If Mr. Barrett (who, give me leave to say, cannot know much of antiquity if he believes in the authenticity of those papers) intends

intends to make use of them, would he not do better to have recourse to the originals, than to the slight fragments you have sent me? You say, Sir, you know them to be genuine; pray let me ask again, of what age are they? and how have they been transmitted? In what book of any age is there mention made either of Rowley or of the poetical monk, his ancient predecessor in such pure poetry? poetry, so resembling both Spenser and the moderns, and written in metre invented long since Rowley, and longer since the monk wrote. I doubt Mr. Barrett himself will find it difficult to solve these doubts.

For myself, I undoubtedly will never print those extracts as genuine, which I am far from believing they are. If you want them, Sir, I will have them copied, and will send you the copy. But having a little suspicion that your letters may have been designed to laugh at me, if I had fallen into the snare, you will allow me to preserve your original letters, as an ingenious contrivance, however unsuccessful. This seems the more probable, as any man would understand by your first letter, that you either was possessed of the original MSS. or had taken copies of them; whereas now you talk as if you had no copy but those written at the bottom of the very letters I have received from you.

I own I should be better diverted, if it proved that you have chosen to entertain yourself at my expense, than if you really thought these pieces ancient. The former would show you had little opinion of my judgement; the latter, that you ought not to trust too much to your own. I should not at all take the former ill, as I am not vain of it; I should be sorry for the latter

latter, as you say, Sir, that you are very young, and it would be pity an ingenious young man should be too early prejudiced in his own favour.¹

65. *To George Montagu*

[*Aetat 52*]

Strawberry Hill
Saturday night, July 7, 1770

After making an inn of your house, it is but decent to thank you for my entertainment, and to acquaint you with the result of my journey. The party passed off much better than I expected. A Princess at the head of a very small set for five days together did not promise well. However, she was very good-humoured and easy, and dispensed with a large quantity of etiquette. Lady Temple is good nature itself, my Lord was very civil, Lord Besborough is made to suit all sorts of people, Lady Mary Coke respects royalty too much not to be very condescending, Lady Ann Howard and Mrs. Middleton filled up the drawing-room, or rather made it out, and I was so determined to carry it off as well as I could, and happened to be in such good spirits, and took such care to avoid politics, that we laughed a great deal, and had not a cloud the whole time.

We breakfasted at half an hour after nine; but the Princess did not appear till it was finished; then we walked in the garden

¹ The following note was appended by Horace Walpole to this letter:—'N.B. The above letter I had begun to write to Chatterton on his re-demanding his MSS., but not choosing to enter into a controversy with him, I did not finish it, and, only folding up his papers, returned them.'—T.

garden, or drove about it in cabriolets, till it was time to dress; dined at three, which, though properly proportioned to the smallness of company to avoid ostentation, lasted a vast while, as the Princess eats and talks a great deal; then again into the garden till past seven, when we came in, drank tea and coffee, and played at pharaoh till ten, when the Princess retired, and we went to supper, and before twelve to bed. You see there was great sameness and little vivacity in all this. It was a little broken by fishing, and going round the park one of the mornings; but, in reality, the number of buildings and variety of scenes in the garden made each day different from the rest: and my meditations on so historic a spot prevented my being tired. Every acre brings to one's mind some instance of the parts or pedantry, of the taste or want of taste, of the ambition or love of fame, or greatness or miscarriages, of those that have inhabited, decorated, planned, or visited the place. Pope, Congreve, Vanbrugh, Kent, Gibbs, Lord Cobham, Lord Chesterfield, the mob of nephews, the Lytteltons, Grenvilles, Wests, Leonidas Glover and Wilkes, the late Prince of Wales, the King of Denmark, Princess Amelie, and the proud monuments of Lord Chatham's services, now enshrined there, then anathematized there, and now again commanding there, with the Temple of Friendship, like the Temple of Janus, sometimes open to war, and sometimes shut up in factious cabals—all these images crowd upon one's memory, and add visionary personages to the charming scenes, that are so enriched with fanes and temples, that the real prospects are little less than visions themselves.

On

On Wednesday night a small Vauxhall was acted for us at the grotto in the Elysian fields, which was illuminated with lamps, as were the thicket and two little barks on the lake. With a little exaggeration I could make you believe that nothing ever was so delightful. The idea was really pretty, but, as my feelings have lost something of their romantic sensibility, I did not quite enjoy such an entertainment *al fresco* so much as I should have done twenty years ago. The evening was more than cool, and the destined spot anything but dry. There were not half lamps enough, and no music but an ancient militia-man, who played cruelly on a squeaking tabor and pipe. As our procession descended the vast flight of steps into the garden, in which was assembled a crowd of people from Buckingham and the neighboring villages to see the Princess and the show, the moon shining very bright, I could not help laughing as I surveyed our troop, which, instead of tripping lightly to such an Arcadian entertainment, were hobbling down by the balustrades, wrapped up in cloaks and great-coats, for fear of catching cold. The Earl, you know, is bent double, the Countess very lame, I am a miserable walker, and the Princess, though as strong as a Brunswick lion, makes no figure in going down fifty stone stairs. Except Lady Ann—and by courtesy Lady Mary, we were none of us young enough for a pastoral. We supped in the grotto, which is as proper to this climate as a sea-coal fire would be in the dog-days at Tivoli.

But the chief entertainment of the week, at least what was so to the Princess, is an arch, which Lord Temple has erected to her honour in the most enchanting of all picturesque scenes.

It

‘Nor this happy, this amiable festival spoil.
Can your shrine any longer with garlands be drest?
When a true goddess reigns, all the false are supprest.’

If you will keep my counsel, I will own to you, that originally the two last lines were much better, but I was forced to alter them out of decorum, not to be too pagan upon the occasion; in short, here they are as in the first sketch,—

Recollect, once before that our oracle ceased,
When a real Divinity rose in the East.

So many heathen temples around had made me talk as a Roman poet would have done: but I corrected my verses, and have made them insipid enough to offend nobody. Good night. I am rejoiced to be once more in the gay solitude of my own little Tempe.

Yours ever,
H. W.

66. *To Lady Mary Coke*

[*Aetat 53*]

Paris
Aug. 22, 1771

I never trouble your Ladyship with common news. The little events of the world are below the regard of one who steps from throne to throne, and converses only with demi-gods and demigoddesses. Parliaments are broken here every
day

day about our ears, but their splinters are not of consequence enough to send you. I waited for something worthy of being entered in your imperial archives—little thinking that I should be happy enough to be the first to inform you, at least to ascertain you, of the most extraordinary discovery that ever was made, and far more important than the forty dozen of islands, which Dr. Solander¹ has picked up the Lord knows where, as he went to catch new sorts of fleas and crickets; and which said islands, if well husbanded, may produce forty more wars. The discovery I mean will occasion great desolation too: it will produce a violent change in the empire of Parnassus, it will be very prejudicial to the eyes, and considerably reduce the value of what Cibber called the *paraphonalia of a woman of quality*. It is difficult not to moralize on so trist an event! Can we wonder at that fleeting condition of human life, when the brightest and most durable of essences is proved to be but a vapour! No, Madam, I do not mean angels. They have been in some danger; but have been saved, at least for some time, by Madame du Barry, and the late edicts that wink at the return of the Jesuits. The radiances in question have undergone a more fiery trial, and their nothingness is condemned without reprieve. Yes, Madam, diamonds are a bubble, and adamant itself has lost its obduracy! I am sorry to say that it would be a greater compliment now to tell a beauty that she had ruby eyes, than to compare them to a diamond, and if your Ladyship's heart were no harder than adamant, I should be sure
of

¹ Daniel Charles Solander (1736-1782), who accompanied Cook and Banks on their voyage in the *Endeavour*.—T.

of finding it no longer irresistible. As this memorable process took its rise at Vienna, your Ladyship may perhaps have heard something of it.¹ Public experiences have now been made here; and the day before yesterday the ordeal trial was executed. A diamond was put into a crucible over a moderate fire, and in an hour was absolutely annihilated. No ashes were left, not enough to enclose in a fancy-ring. An emerald mounted the scaffold next—its verdure suffered, but not its essence. The third was a ruby, who triumphed over the flames, and came forth from the furnace as unhurt as Shadrac, Meshac and Abednego—to the immortal disgrace of the diamond: a crystal behaved with as much heroism as the ruby, and not a hair of its head was singed. Nobody can tell how far this revolution will go. For my part, as I foresee that no woman of quality will deign to wear any more diamonds, and that next to rubies, crystal will be the principal ornament in a lady's dress, I am buying up all the old lustres I can meet with. I have already got a piece of two thousand weight, and that I hope to sell for fifty thousand pounds to the first nabob's daughter that is married, for a pair of earrings; and I have another still larger, that I am taking to pieces and intend to have set in a stomacher large enough for the most prominent slope of the present age. Madame du Barry they say has already given Pitt's diamond to her chambermaid; and if Lord Pigott² is wise, he will change his at Betts's glass shop for a dozen

¹ These experiments are described in *Ann. Reg.*, 1771, p. 141.—T.

² George Pigot (1719-1777), first Baron Pigot, Governor of Madras, 1755-1763, 1775-1776. He bequeathed his diamond to his brothers and sisters, who sold it for more than twenty-three thousand pounds.—T.

dozen strong beer glasses. As to Lord Clive and the Lady of Loretto, I do not feel much pity for them; they are rich enough to stand this loss. The reflections one might make on this disaster are infinite, but I will take up no more of your Ladyship's time—nor do I condole with you, Madam; your philosophy is incapable of being shaken by so sublunary a consideration, as a decrease in the value of your large ring. It has a secret and inestimable merit, which is out of the power of a crucible to assail; and you and it will remain or become stars, when the fashion of this world passeth away.

I am, Madam,

Your Ladyship's most faithful humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

67. *To the Rev. William Mason*

[Aetat 53]

Strawberry Hill

Sept. 25, 1771

I have received both your letters, Sir, by Mr. Stonhewer and by the post from York. I direct this to Aston rather than to York, for fear of any miscarriage, and will remember to insert *near Sheffield*.

I not only agree with your sentiments, but am flattered that they countenance my own practice. In some cases I have sold my works, and sometimes have made the impressions at my own press pay themselves, as I am not rich enough to treat the public with all I print there; nor do I know why I should. Some editions have been given to charities, to the poor of

Twickenham

Twickenham, &c. Mr. Spence's Life of Magliabecchi was bestowed on the reading tailor. I am neither ashamed of being an author, nor a bookseller. My mother's father was a timber-merchant, I have many reasons for thinking myself a worse man, and none for thinking myself better: consequently I shall never blush at doing anything he did. I print much better than I write, and love my trade, and hope I am not one of those *most undeserving of all objects*, printers and booksellers, whom I confess you lash with justice. In short, Sir, I have no notion of poor Mr. Gray's¹ delicacy. I would not sell my talents as orators and senators do, but I would keep a shop, and sell any of my own works that would gain me a livelihood, whether books or shoes, rather than be tempted to sell myself. 'Tis an honest vocation to be a scavenger, but I would not be Solicitor-General. Whatever method you fix upon for the publication of Mr. Gray's works, I dare answer I shall approve, and will, therefore, say no more on it till we meet. I will beg you, Sir, when you come to town to bring me what papers or letters he had preserved of mine: for the answer to Dr. Milles,² it is not worth asking you to accept or to take the trouble of bringing me, and, therefore, you may fling it aside where you please.

The epitaph is very unworthy of the subject. I had rather anybody should correct my works than take the pains myself. I thank you very sincerely for criticizing it, but indeed I believe you would with much less trouble write a new one than mend that

¹ Gray had died four months earlier.

² Who had attacked Walpole's *Historic Doubts of Richard III.*

that. I abandon it cheerfully to the fire, for surely bad verses on a great poet are the worst of panegyrics. The sensation of the moment dictated the epitaph, but though I was concerned, I was not inspired. Your corrections of my play I remember with the greatest gratitude, because I confess I liked it enough to wish it corrected, and for that friendly act, Sir, I am obliged to you. For writing, I am quitting all thoughts of it; and for several reasons—the best is because it is time to remember that I must quit the world. Mr. Gray was but a year older, and he had much more the appearance of a man to whom several years were promised. A contemporary's death is the Ucalegon of all sermons. In the next place his death has taught me another truth. Authors are said to labour for posterity; for my part I find I did not write even for the rising generation. Experience tells me it was all for those of my own, or near my own, time. The friends I have lost were, I find, more than half the public to me. It is as difficult to write for young people, as to talk to them; I never, I perceive, meant anything about them in what I have written, and cannot commence an acquaintance with them in print.

Mr. Gray was far from an agreeable confidant to self-love, yet I had always more satisfaction in communicating anything to him, though sure to be mortified, than in being flattered by people whose judgement I do not respect. We had besides known each other's ideas from almost infancy, and I was certain he would *understand* precisely whatever I said, whether it was well- or ill-expressed. This is a kind of feeling that every hour of age increases. Mr. Gray's death, I am persuaded, Sir,
has

has already given you this sensation, and I make no excuse for talking seemingly so much of myself, but though I am the instance of these reflections, they are only part of the conversation, which that sad event occasions, and which I trust we shall renew. I shall sincerely be a little consoled if our common regret draws us nearer together; you will find all possible esteem on my side: as there has been much similarity in some of our pursuits, it may make amends for other defects. I have done with the business, the politics, the pleasures of the world; without turning hermit or morose. My object is to pass the remainder of my life tranquilly and agreeably, with all the amusements that will gild the evening, and are not subject to disappointment; with cheerfulness, for I have very good spirits, and with as much of the company, as I can obtain, of the few persons I value and like. If you have charity enough or inclination to contribute to such a system you will add much to the happiness of it, and if you have not, you will still allow me to say I shall be ever, with great regard, Sir,

Your obedient humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

68. *To Lady Mary Coke*

[*Aetat 54*]

Arlington Street

Dec. 11, 1771

Lady Strafford tells me I ought to write to your Ladyship. I obey, though I am not quite clear that she is in the right.

Can

Can you care for hearing from anybody in England, Madam, when you are indifferent whether you see them or not? I could say a great deal upon this subject, but I will not, only do not be surprised that I have got a new passion. Ancient paladins, I know, were bound to maintain constancy, though they travelled all over the world; but no act of the Parliament of Love was ever passed enjoining fidelity to knights, when it was their ladies that took to travelling. Indeed, if your Ladyship had made a vow to wander till you had obliged every fair dame in Europe to confess how much handsomer I am than their lovers, something might be said; but as you have sent no conquered Amazon to kiss my hand, and to acknowledge my claim, I am not bound to believe that you are travelling to assert my glory; and therefore, regarding you as a truant, I have thrown my handkerchief to another lady, and declare by these presents that I renounce your Ladyship's allegiance. It will be in vain to mount your milk-white palfrey and amble home directly; the die is cast—and Heaven knows whether matrimony itself may not ensue. I shall always retain a sincere friendship for you, but really there was no end of having one's heart jolted about from one country to another, and of having it lugged once a year to Vienna. A heart torn to pieces, like flags torn in battle, is very becoming; but a heart black and blue is horrible, and I can tell you, your Ladyship does not look the better for it, though you have endeavoured to conceal its bruises by embroidering it all over with spread eagles.¹

But

¹ An allusion to Lady Mary Coke's *penchant* for the Austrian Imperial family.—T.

But here I drop the subject: you are now your own mistress, Madam, and may seek what adventures you please, undisturbed by me. I shall be sorry to see you return even with two black eyes, but shall bear it with all the philosophy of friendship; and as friends always do, shall content myself with telling you that it was your own fault, and with recommending the best eye-water I know. Can a friend go farther, except in whispering to everybody, that if you would have taken my advice, you would have stayed at home?

The best news I can send you, Madam, is that I never saw Lady Strafford look in better health. The town is a desert: grass grows in the pit at the Opera. The Princess of Brunswick is coming: the Princess Dowager is going. There is the devil to pay I don't know where; ¹ and the Duke of Chandos is dead to the great joy of that noble family. All the fine ladies are in love with Prince Poniatowski, and some of them win his money at loo—that they may have something to keep for his sake. England is in profound peace. Ireland in a hubbub. December, which is indeed no news to you, is warmer than June, and which is still less news

I am

Your Ladyship's

Most devoted

(though inconstant)

Humble Servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

What

¹ In Denmark, where the position of the Queen and Struensee was most critical.—T.

69. *To the Rev. William Mason*¹

[Aetat 55]

March 2, 1773

What shall I say? how shall I thank you for the kind manner in which you submit your papers² to my correction? But if you are friendly I must be just: I am so far from being dissatisfied, that I must beg leave to sharpen your pen, and in that light only, with regard to myself, would make any alterations in your text. I am conscious, that in the beginning of the differences between Gray and me, the fault was mine. I was too young, too fond of my own diversions, nay, I do not doubt, too much intoxicated by indulgence, vanity, and the insolence of my situation, as a Prime Minister's son, not to have been inattentive and insensible to the feelings of one I thought below me; of one, I blush to say it, that I knew was obliged to me; of one whom presumption and folly perhaps made me deem not my superior *then* in parts, though I have since felt my infinite inferiority to him. I treated him insolently: he loved me, and I did not think he did. I reproached him with the difference between us, when he acted from conviction of knowing he was my superior. I often disregarded his wishes of seeing places, which I would not quit other amusements to visit, though I offered to send him to them without me. Forgive me, if I say that his temper was not conciliating; at the same time that I will confess to you that he acted a more friendly part

¹ The first part of this letter has been omitted.

² Mason submitted to Horace Walpole for revision those parts of his *Life of Gray* in which Walpole's name was mentioned.

part, had I had the sense to take advantage of it—he freely told me of my faults. I declared I did not desire to hear them, nor would correct them. You will not wonder that with the dignity of his spirit, and the obstinate carelessness of mine, the breach must have grown wider, till we became incompatible. After this confession, I fear you will think I fall far short of the justice I promised him, in the words which I should wish to have substituted to some of yours. If you think them inadequate to the state of the case, as I own they are, preserve this letter, and let some future Sir John Dalrymple produce it to load my memory; but I own I do not desire that any ambiguity should aid his invention to forge an account for me. If you have no objection, I would propose your narrative should run thus, and contain no more, till a more proper time shall come for stating the truth, as I have related it to you. While I am living, it is not pleasant to read one's private quarrels discussed in magazines and newspapers.

In Section Second

‘But I must here add, in order to forewarn my readers of a disappointment, that this correspondence (viz. during his travels) is defective towards the end, and includes no description either of Venice or its territory, the last places which Mr. Gray visited. This defect was occasioned by an unfortunate disagreement between him and Mr. Walpole, which arising from the great difference of temper between the pensive, curious philosophy of the former, and the gay and youthful
inconsideration

inconsideration of the latter, occasioned their separation at Reggio.'

Note to be added. 'In justice to the memory of so respectable a friend, Mr. Walpole enjoins me to charge him with the chief blame in their quarrel, confessing that more attention, complaisance, and deference on his part to a warm friendship and to a very superior understanding and judgement might have prevented a rupture, which gave much uneasiness to both, and a lasting concern to the survivor, though in the year 1744 a reconciliation was effected between them by a lady, who wished well to them both.'¹

This note I think will specify all that is necessary, and though humiliating to me, it is due to my friend, and a vindication I owe him. It is also all that seems necessary either in section the second or fourth. As to section third, it is far from accurate, and in one respect what I am sure you will have too much regard to me to mention, as it would hurt me in a very sensible part. You will I am sure sacrifice it to my entreaty, especially as it is to introduce nothing to the prejudice of Mr. Gray: nay, I think he would rather dislike the mention. I mean the place that I might have obtained for him from my father. That I should have tried for such emolument for him, there is no doubt; at least have proposed it to him, though I am far from being clear he would have accepted it. I know that till he did accept the Professorship from the Duke of Grafton, it was my constant belief that he would scorn any place. My inclination to be serviceable to him was so intense, that

¹ So printed in Mason.

that when we went abroad together, I left a will behind in which I gave him all I then possessed in the world—it was indeed a very trifling all!

With regard to what my father would have done, let me recall the period to you or tell it to you, if you do not know it. I came over ¹ in the end of September; my father resigned in the beginning of the following February. Considering how unfavourable to him the new Parliament was, it would, I believe, with any partiality to me, have been impossible for him to have given away any place worth Gray's acceptance, but to a member of Parliament during those four critical months; but this, my dear Sir, is not the part that touches me most. They are your kind words, *favorite son*. Alas! if I ever was so, I was not so thus early! Nor were I so, would I for the world have such a word dropped; it would stab my living brother to the soul, who I have often said adored his father, and of all his children loved him the best. You see I am making a pretty general confession, but can claim absolution on no foundation but that of repentance; you will at least, I am sure, not wound an innocent, meritorious brother from partiality to me. Do just as you think fit about his letters ² to me: I never thought above a very few proper for publication, but gave them up to you to prove my deference and unreserve. As I still think them charming, I beg to have them again; I have scarce any of his letters that I can call literary, for they only relate to informations he gave me for my own trifling

¹ Horace Walpole returned to England from Italy in Sept. 1741.—T.

² Gray's letters.—T.

trifling books; and I should be ashamed to show how ill I employed such time as his. Indeed they contain little more than the notices I have mentioned to have received from him. Whatever I have of that sort are at Strawberry, and as I am but just able yet, after two-and-twenty weeks, to take the air in Hyde Park, God knows when I shall be able to go to Twickenham. Life itself is grown far less dear to me, since I seem to see a prospect of surviving all that is worth living for. Mr. Martin, my reversionary heir, is ready in every sense to encourage me in these sentiments. Three months ago, when the newspapers proclaimed me dying, he sent a Treasury creature to my clerk to know the worth of my place. The young man was shocked, and asked why Mr. Martin did not apply to me? No, said the agent, Mr. Martin would think that too indelicate. However, not to be too delicate himself when his principal's interest was concerned, he threatened my clerk with Mr. Martin's turning him out as soon as I should be dead. I recollect Martin's practising at the target for six months before he fought Wilkes, and say if I am to blame in a resolution of never dining with my heir-apparent.

I have written such a volume here, and so much on Dalrymples and Martins and kings, that my hand pretends to feel a little gout, and pleads that it is too hard to be forced to talk of Macpherson too. You may be sure, however, that I have not read nor shall I read his *Homer travesti*; ¹ all I will add is, that the Scotch seem to be proving they are really descended from the Irish. Dalrymple has discovered human-
ity

¹ A prose translation of the *Iliad*.—T.

ity to a trunk. Macpherson, I suppose, has been proving by his version, how easy it was to make a Fingal out of Homer, after having tried to prove that Fingal was an original poem. But we live in an age of contradictions. Mr. *Mac* Jenkinson, the other day on the Thirty-nine Articles, called Laud a *very very great man*, and in the same breath, stigmatized those apostles of the Stuarts, David Hume and Lord Bolingbroke. Can a house divided against itself stand? Did not Bolingbroke beget Lord Mansfield and Andrew Stone? Did not Mansfield and Stone beget the Bishop of Chester? Are not atheism and bigotry first cousins? Was not Charles II an atheist and a bigot? and does Mr. Hume pluck a stone from a church but to raise an altar to tyranny? Thank God, if we have as great rogues as Buckingham, Arlington, and Lauderdale, at least they are as great fools as Father Petre.² For King James I find no parallel—he was sincere in his religion. Adieu! I leave my name out to be supplied by

SIR JOHN DALRYMPLE.

70. *To the Rev. William Mason*

[Ætæt 55]

Strawberry Hill

March 27, 1773

I received your letter, dear Sir, your MS. and Gray's letters to me, by Mr. Alderson. Twenty things crowd about my pen and jostle and press to be said. As I came hither to-day (my first flight since my illness) for a little air, and to read you undisturbed

² Father Edward Petre (1631-1699), confessor of James II.—T.

undisturbed, they shall all have their place in good time; but having so safe a conveyance for my thoughts, I must begin with the uppermost of them, the *Heroic Epistle*.¹ I have read it so very often that I have got it by heart, and as I am now master of all its beauties, I profess I like it infinitely better than I did, and yet I thought I liked it infinitely before: there is more wit, ten times more delicacy of irony, as much poetry and greater facility than, and as, in the *Dunciad*. But what signifies what I think? all the world thinks the same, except a dark corner, where its being so much disliked is still better praise. No soul, as I have heard, has guessed within an hundred miles. I caught at Anstey's² name, and I believe contributed to spread that notion. It has since been called Temple Luttrell's, and to my infinite honour mine. Lord Nuneham swears he should think so, if I did not commend it so excessively! oh, how very vain I am! Sir William Chambers consoles himself with its having sold him three hundred copies of his book. I do not hear that the patron of arts³ consoles himself with anything, but is heartily sore: he *would* read it insultingly to Chambers, but soon flung it down in a passion. It is already of the fourth edition. Thank you for giving my impatient heir, Sam Martin, a niche.⁴ There is published a defence of negro slavery by his father.

But now, my dear Sir, as you have tapped this mine of talent,
and

¹ A satiric poem written anonymously by Mason and addressed to Sir William Chambers, author of *Dissertations on Oriental Gardening*.

² Christopher Anstey, author of *The New Bath Guide*, which Walpole had highly praised.

³ The King.—T.

⁴ See preceding letter.

and it runs so richly and easily, for Heaven's and England's sake do not let it rest. You have a vein of irony and satire that the best of causes bleeds for having wanted. Point all your lightnings at that wretch Dalrymple, and yet make him but the footstool to the throne as you made poor simple Chambers. We are acting the very same scene Dalrymple has brought to fuller light, sacrificing friends to stab heroes and martyrs. There are repeated informations from France that preliminaries of strict union are signed between that court and ours; Lord Stormont¹ is the negotiator, and Lord Mansfield, who has not courage enough even to be Chancellor, hopes the Chancellor of France has courage and villainy enough to assist him in enslaving us, as the French Chancellor² has enslaved his own country! If you mind not me, depend upon it you will meet the indignant shade of Sidney in your moonlight walk by your cold bath, who will frown inspiration. You see what you can do, what Milton trusted to prose, what Pope had not principles elevated enough to do, and for doing what Gray's bards will bless you. In short, you have seated yourself close to all three, and you must now remain in full display of your dignity. When *Gray's Life* is finished, you are not permitted to write anything inferior to the *Dispensary*. Thank you for your admirable remark on Barillon's³ letter: I will communicate it to Mrs. Macaulay, without naming you. She will

¹ Ambassador at Paris.—T.

² Maupeou.—T.

³ Paul de Barillon d'Amoncourt (d. 1691), Marquis de Branges, Ambassador Extraordinary in London in 1677. Mason considered that there were 'evident internal marks of forgery in Barillon's memoir relating to Algernon Sidney.'—T.

will defend Sidney in her next volume, but he demands a higher pen.

I am extremely pleased with the easy unaffected simplicity of your MS., nor have found anything scarce I would wish added, much less retrenched; unless the paragraph on Lord Bute, which I do not think quite clearly expressed, and yet perhaps too clearly, while you choose to remain unknown for author of the *Epistle*. The paragraph I mean might lead to a suspicion: might it not look a little too, as if Gray, at least his friends for him, had been disappointed? Especially as he asked for the place, and accepted it afterwards from the Duke of Grafton? Since Gray (and I am sorry he did not) has left no marks of indignation against the present times, I do not know whether it were so well to mix politics with a life so unpolitical. But I only suggest this: you are sure I do not speak from disinclination to the censure, but from infinite regard both for him and you. The page and reflections on poor West's¹ death are new, most touching, most exquisitely worded.

I send you Mr. Andrew Stewart's book; and as I had two given to me, I beg you will accept that I send. It will be a great curiosity, for after all his heroism, fear or nationality have preponderated, and it will not be published.

I can add nothing to your account of Gray's going abroad with me. It was my own thought and offer, and was cheerfully accepted. Thank you for inserting my alteration; as I survive, any softening would be unjust to the dead; and nobody can justify him so well as my confession and attestation. It must
be

¹ Richard West, the early friend of Gray and Walpole, d. 1742.

be believed that I was in the wrong, not he, when I allow it. In things of that nature, the survivor has the better chance of being justified; and for your sake, dear Sir, as well as his, I choose you should do justice to your friend. I am sorry I had a fault towards him: it does not wound me to own it.

I return you Mr. Trollope's verses, of which many are excellent, and yet I cannot help thinking the best were Gray's, not only as they appear in his writing, but as they are more nervous and less diffuse than the others. When we meet, why should not we select the best, and make a complete poem? ¹

Dr. Goldsmith has written a comedy ²—no, it is the lowest of all farces. It is not the subject I condemn, though very vulgar, but the execution. The drift tends to no moral, no edification of any kind. The situations, however, are well imagined, and make one laugh, in spite of the grossness of the dialogue, the forced witticisms, and total improbability of the whole plan and conduct. But what disgusts me most is, that though the characters are very low, and aim at low humour, not one of them says a sentence that is natural or marks any character at all. It is set up in opposition to sentimental comedy, and is as bad as the worst of them. Garrick would not act it, but bought himself off by a poor prologue. I say nothing of Home's *Alonzo* and Murphy's *Alzuma*, because as the latter is sense and poetry compared to the former, you cannot want an account of either.

Mr.

¹ *The Characters of the Christ-Cross Row*, printed from a fragment preserved by Horace Walpole in Gosse's *Works of Gray*, vol. i, p. 410.—T.

² *She Stoops to Conquer*, first performed on March 15, 1773.

Mr. Nicholls is returned, transported with Italy. I hope he will come hither with me next week; Gothic ground may sober him a little from pictures and statues, which he will not meet with in his village, and which I doubt will at first be a little irksome. His friend Mr. Barrett stands for Dover, I suppose on the court interest, for Wilkes has sent down a remonstrating candidate. I like the *Parliamentary right*¹ in his City remonstrance. I forgot to tell you too, that I believe the Scotch are heartily sick of their Dalrymplyan publication. It has reopened all the mouths of clamour; and the *Heroic Epistle* arrived in the critical minute to furnish clamour with quotations. You cannot imagine how I used it as fumigation. Whenever I was asked, Have you read Sir John Dalrymple? I replied, Have you read the *Heroic Epistle*? Betty² is in raptures on being immortalized; the elephant and ass³ are become constellations, and *he has stolen the Earl of Denbigh's handkerchief*⁴ is the proverb in fashion—good night.

Pope—Garth—Boileau—you may guess whether I am or not

Your sincere admirer,

HOR. WALPOLE.

What

¹ 'The parliamentary right of your Majesty to the crown of these realms.' (*Ann. Reg.* 1773, p. 209.)—T.

² Betty Neale:—

'There, at one glance, the royal eye shall meet
Each varied beauty of St. James' Street;
Stout Talbot there shall ply with hackney chair
And Patriot Betty fix her fruit-shop there.'

Heroic Epistle, 11.113-116.—T.

³ 'In some fair island will we turn to grass.
(With the Queen's leave) her elephant and ass.'

Ibid., 11.74-75.—T.

⁴ 'See Jemmy Twitcher shambles; stop! stop thief!
He's stol'n the Earl of Denbigh's handkerchief.'

Ibid., 11.125-126.—T.

71. *To the Countess of Upper Ossory*¹

[Ætæt 55]

Strawberry Hill

March 27, 1773

What play makes you laugh very much, and yet is a very wretched comedy? Dr. Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*. Stoops indeed!—so she does, that is the Muse; she is dragged up to the knees, and has trudged, I believe, from Southwark Fair. The whole view of the piece is low humour, and no humour is in it. All the merit is in the situations, which are comic; the heroine has no more modesty than Lady Bridget, and the author's wit is as much *manqué* as the lady's; but some of the characters are well acted, and Woodward speaks a poor prologue, written by Garrick, admirably.

You perceive, Madam, that I have boldly sallied to a play; but the heat of the house and of this sultry March half killed me, yet I limp about as if I was young and pleased. From the play I travelled to Upper Grosvenor Street, to Lady Edgumbe's, supped at Lady Hertford's. That Maccaroni rake, Lady Powis, who is just come to her estate and spending it, calling in with news of a fire in the Strand at past one in the morning, Lady Hertford, Lady Powis, Mrs. Howe, and I, set out to see it, and were within an inch of seeing the Adelphi buildings

¹ Hon. Anne Liddell (d. 1804) d. of first Baron Ravensworth; m. 1. (1756) Earl of Euston (succeeded his grandfather as third Duke of Grafton in 1757), from whom she was separated in 1765, and divorced in 1769; 2. (1769) John Fitzpatrick, second Earl of Ossory. She was the object of Walpole's admiration and interest as Duchess of Grafton. After her divorce and marriage to Lord Ossory (whom Walpole greatly esteemed) their friendship continued, and she became one of Walpole's regular correspondents. . . . T.

buildings burnt to the ground. "I was to have gone to the Oratorio next night for Miss Linley's sake, but, being engaged to the French Ambassador's ball afterwards, I thought I was not quite Hercules enough for so many labours, and declined the former.

The house was all arbours and bowers, but rather more approaching to Calcutta, where so many English were stewed to death; for as the Queen would not dis-Maid of Honour herself of Miss Vernon till after the Oratorio, the ball-room was not opened till she arrived, and we were penned together in the little hall till we could not breathe. The quadrilles were very pretty: Mrs. Damer, Lady Sefton, Lady Melbourne, and the Princess Czartoriski in blue satin, with blond and *collets montés à la reine Elizabeth*; Lord Robert Spencer, Mr. Fitzpatrick, Lord Carlisle, and I forget whom, in like dresses with red sashes, *de rouge*, black hats with diamond loops and a few feathers before, began; then the Henri Quatres and Quatresses, who were Lady Craven, Miss Minching, the two Misses Vernons, Mrs. Storer, Mr. Hanger, the Duc de Lauzun, and George Damer, all in white, the men with black hats and white feathers flapping behind, danced another quadrille, and then both quadrilles joined; after which Mrs. Hobart, all in gauze and spangles, like a spangle-pudding, a Miss I forget, Lord Edward Bentinck, and a Mr. Corbet, danced a *pas de quatre*, in which Mrs. Hobart indeed performed admirably.

The fine Mrs. Matthews in white, trimmed down all the neck and petticoat with scarlet cock's feathers, appeared like a

new

new macaw brought from Otaheite; but of all the pretty creatures next to the Carrara (who was not there) was Mrs. Bunbury; so that with her I was in love till one o'clock, and then came home to bed. The Duchess of Queensberry had a round gown of rose-colour, with a man's cape, which, with the stomacher and sleeves, was all trimmed with mother-of-pearl earrings. This Pindaric gown was a sudden thought to surprise the Duke, with whom she had dined in another dress. Did you ever see so good a joke?

I forgot to tell your Ladyship that Miss Loyd is in the new play¹ by the name of Rachael Buckskin, though he has altered it in the printed copies. Somebody wrote for her a very sensible reproof to him, only it ended with an indecent *grossièreté*. However, the fool took it seriously, and wrote a most dull and scurrilous answer; but, luckily for him, Mr. Beauclerk and Mr. Garrick intercepted it.

Lord Chesterfield was dead before my last letter that foretold his death set out. Alas! I shall have no more of his lively sayings, Madam, to send you. Oh yes! I have his last: being told of his quarrel in Spitalfields, and even that Mrs. F. struck Miss P., he said, 'I always thought Mrs. F. a *striking* beauty.'

Thus, having given away all his wit to the last farthing, he has left nothing but some poor witticisms in his will, tying up his heir by forfeitures and jokes from going to Newmarket.

I wrote this letter at Strawberry, and find nothing new in town to add but a cold north-east that has brought back all our
fires

¹ *She Stoops to Conquer*.—T.

fires and furs. Pray tell me a little of your Ladyship's futurity, and whether you will deign to pass through London.

72. *To the Rev. William Cole*

[Aetat 55]

Arlington Street

April 27, 1773

I had not time this morning to answer your letter by Mr. Essex, but I gave him the card you desired. You know, I hope, how happy I am to obey any orders of yours.

In the paper I showed you in answer to Masters, you saw I was apprised of Rastel's *Chronicle*, but pray do not mention my knowing of it, because I draw so much from it, that I lie in wait, hoping that Milles, or Masters, or some of their fools, will produce it against me, and then I shall have another word to say to them, which they do not expect, since they think Rastel makes for them.

Mr. Gough¹ wants to be introduced to me! Indeed! I would see him, as he has been midwife to Masters, but he is so dull that he would only be troublesome—and besides you know I shun authors, and would never have been one myself, if it obliged me to keep such bad company. They are always in earnest, and think their profession serious, and dwell upon trifles, and reverence learning. I laugh at all those things, and write only to laugh at them, and divert myself. None of us are authors of any consequence, and it is the most ridiculous of all vanities to be vain of being mediocre. A page in a great
author

¹ Richard Gough (1735-1809), the antiquary.

author humbles me to the dust, and the conversation of those that are not superior to myself reminds me of what will be thought of myself. I blush to flatter them, or to be flattered by them, and should dread letters being published some time or other, in which they should relate our interviews, and we should appear like those puny conceited witlings in Shenstone's and Hughes's *Correspondence*, who give themselves airs from being in possession of the soil of Parnassus for the time being, as peers are proud, because they enjoy the estates of great men who went before them. Mr. Gough is very welcome to see Strawberry Hill, or I would help him to any scraps in my possession that would assist his publications, though he is one of those industrious who are only re-burying the dead—but I cannot be acquainted with him. It is contrary to my system and my humour; and, besides, I know nothing of barrows, and Danish entrenchments, and Saxon barbarisms, and Phœnician characters—in short, I know nothing of those ages that knew nothing—then how should I be of use to modern litterati? All the Scotch metaphysicians have sent me their works. I did not read one of them, because I do not understand what is not understood by those that write about it, and I did not get acquainted with one of the writers. I should like to be intimate with Mr. Anstey, even though he wrote Lord Buckhorse, or with the author of the *Heroic Epistle*.—I have no thirst to know the rest of my contemporaries, from the absurd bombast of Dr. Johnson down to the silly Dr. Goldsmith, though the latter changeling has had bright gleams of parts, and the former had sense, till he changed it for words, and
sold

sold it for a pension. Don't think me scornful. Recollect that I have seen Pope, and lived with Gray. Adieu!

Yours ever,

H. WALPOLE.

P. S. Mr. Essex has shown me a charming drawing, from a charming round window at Lincoln. It has revived all my eagerness to have him continue his plan.

73. *To Sir Horace Mann*

[*Aetat 55*]

Strawberry Hill

July 13, 1773

I have delayed writing to you from day to day, my dear Sir, that I might be able at last to say something precisely to you about my poor nephew and myself, with regard to his affairs, chiefly for the information of his mother, who has not allured me to write to herself. Her son has had a terrible relapse, and for above a fortnight kept me under dreadful alarms by attempting to destroy himself. He is now quieter, and is settled at Hampstead in a house I have taken for him, and with which he is pleased. He was to have gone to a farm he has near Newmarket, but as I am much upon my guard, I asked whether there was water near it, and being answered yes, a mill-pond and wet ditches, I would not hear of it. Dr. Jebbe reckons this relapse favourable, as opposite to idiotism, into which he seemed sinking. It may be so, but idiotism would guarantee his life; and such relapses (after recovering from the immediate cause of his malady, the violent quack medicines) indicate

indicate strongly to me a radical cause. It is not for his mother's ear, but she knows that he may have inherited the seeds from her own family.

Mr. Sharpe, her lawyer, will give, I hope has given, her a circumstantial account of the bad posture of his affairs. He has promised me to tell her that, perplexing and almost desperate as they are, I have offered to undertake the management of them, and to endeavour by inspection, control, and economy to put them on a better foot. Mr. Sharpe has assured me this will be agreeable to her Ladyship; but I demand and insist on her giving me a positive confirmation of that request under her own hand, or I will immediately throw up the trust, which must be part of my warrant to Chancery, or no consideration shall prevent my relinquishing so difficult and intricate a charge, so fatiguing and troublesome to one of my shattered constitution, and to my love of ease. This, my good friend, for my sake, for the salvation of the family, for the only chance of unravelling the perplexity of affairs in which your own family is concerned, nay, for her own sake, as the whole burden or whole shame will fall on herself, you must persuade her to comply with immediately. The whole world will justify me in refusing if she refuses. My brother, Lord Walpole, and his next brother, have signed to me this request in form. The whole family is happy that I will sacrifice myself to this duty, and everybody approves my conduct. I will say to you that I have but too much reason to think that neither Lord Orford nor a distant view to my own interest call upon me, or even Sir Edward, who is nearer, to thrust ourselves into an invidious situation

situation. We have been told by one that ought to know that my Lord has disinherited us both—indeed, I have the less repugnance for that very reason. My behaviour can then be influenced only by duty. I was a very untractable nephew myself, but I will be a just uncle, though my uncle was not so.

I will trouble you with no more details, though my head and heart are full of them. They have jostled out every other idea, and I fear will occupy the rest of my life, for the vanity of restoring my family engrosses me. My father, excellent and wise as he was, ruined it by pushing this vanity too far. It will be mine to try to repair the havoc of three generations; and this I have had the confidence to call *duty*. But it would please my father, and the thought will be my reward; or I shall cease from this labour and all other thoughts in that small spot that puts an end to vainglory!

When my mind reposes a little, I smile at myself. I intended to trifle out the remnant of my days; and lo! they are invaded by lawyers, stewards, physicians, and jockeys! Yes; this whole week past I have been negotiating a sale of race-horses at Newmarket, and, to the honour of my transactions, the sale has turned out greatly. My Gothic ancestors are forgotten; I am got upon the turf. I give orders about game, dispark Houghton, have plans of farming, vend colts, fillies, bullocks, and sheep, and have not yet confounded terms, nor ordered pointers to be turned to grass. I read the part of the newspapers I used to skip, and peruse the lists of sweepstakes: not the articles of intelligence, nor the relations of the shows at Portsmouth for the King, or at Oxford for the Viceroy
North

North.¹ I must leave Europe and its kings and queens to you; we do not talk of such folks at the Inns of Court. I sold Stoic² for five hundred guineas: I shall never get five pence by the monarchs of the empire, and therefore we jockeys of the Temple, and we lawyers of Newmarket, hold them to be very insignificant individuals. The only political point that touches me at present is what does occasion much noise and trouble,—the new Act that decries guineas under weight. Though I have refused to receive a guinea myself of Lord Orford's income, yet I must see it all paid into my Lady's banker's hands, and I am now in a fright lest the purchase-money of the racers should be made in light coin,—not from suspicion of such *honourable* men, but from their inattention to money. I must tell you a story apropos, which I had this morning from the person to whom it happened last summer. My deputy, Mr. Tullie, has an estate in Yorkshire, where clipping and *de*-coining is most practised. He was to pay an hundred guineas to a farmer there, and desired the man to stay till he could send for them to the nearest market town. The man was in haste, and as Mr. Tullie was just arrived from London, was sure he must have money in the house. With much persuasion he opened his bureau and took out an hundred new pieces, which he did not care to part with in that county where there were none but bad. The man started and refused to take them. 'Sir,' said he, 'there are so many coiners in these parts, that if I was seen to have so many new guineas, I should be

¹ Frederic, Lord North, Prime Minister, and Chancellor of Oxford.—WALPOLE.

² Name of a race-horse.—WALPOLE.

be sent to prison as one of the 'gang,' and he literally waited till an hundred bad guineas could be fetched from Gisborough. They say the bank is to issue five-pound notes: at present all trade is at a stop, and the confusion is extreme. Yea, verily, the villainy and iniquities of the age are bringing things rapidly to a crisis! Ireland is drained, and has not a shilling. The explosion of the Scotch banks has reduced them almost as low, and sunk their flourishing manufactures to low-water ebb. The Maccaronis are at their *ne plus ultra*: Charles Fox is already so like Julius Caesar that he owes an hundred thousand pounds. Lord Carlisle pays fifteen hundred, and Mr. Crewe twelve hundred a year for him—literally for him, being bound for him, while he, as like Brutus as Caesar, is indifferent about such paltry counters: one must talk of Clodius when one has no Scipio. Yet, if the merit of some historian does not interest posterity by the beauty of his narration, this age will be as little known as the annals of the Byzantine Empire, marked only by vices and follies. What is England now?—a sink of Indian wealth, filled in by nabobs and emptied by Maccaronis! A senate sold and despised! A country overrun by horse-races! A gaming, robbing, wrangling, railing nation, without principles, genius, character, or allies; the overgrown shadow of what it was! Lord bless me! I run on like a political barber. I must go back to my shop. I shall let farms well, if I attend to the state of the nation! What's Hecuba to me? Don't read the end of my letter to the Countess; she will think I am as mad as her son.

P. S. St. John Donatello comes down to-morrow to occupy his

his niche in my new chapel in the garden. With Houghton before my eyes, I am indulging myself in making this place delightful.

Monday, 19th

This letter was to have set out last Friday; but it was mislaid by an accident. I heard yesterday that the brother and sister-in-law of one¹ who gave you so much uneasiness near a year ago are going to Italy for some time: the first to Milan. You are at least safe from having them for guests, which you must not even offer. The moment you hear of their approach you had better write for specific directions. The person on whose account you was so ill-treated has no reason to alter his opinion on that transaction; except in being convinced that a want of sense was *not* the cause, which does not add to the opinion of the heart.

74. *To the Countess of Upper Ossory*

[Ætæt 55]

Strawberry Hill

Aug. 9, 1773

Here is a pause from my journeyings, Madam. I returned yesterday from Park Place and Nuneham, and hope for a letter before I go to Houghton on Thursday se'nnight.

Nuneham astonished me with the first *coup d'oeil* of its ugliness, and the next day charmed me. It is as rough as a bear, but capable of being made a most noble scene. There is a fine
apartment

¹ The Duke of Gloucester; his brother and sister-in-law were the Duke and Duchess of Cumberland.—T.

apartment, some few very good pictures, the part of a temple acted by a church, and a flower-garden that would keep all Maccaronia in nosegays. The comfort was a little damped by the constant presence of Sir William Lee and Dame Elizabeth his wife, with a prim Miss, whose lips were stuffed into her nostrils. They sat both upright like macaws on their perches in a menagerie, and scarce said so much. I wanted to bid them *call a coach!* The morning and the evening was the first day, and the morning and the evening was the second day, and still they were just in their places! I made a discovery that was more amusing: Lady Nuneham is a poetess, and writes with great ease and sense, and some poetry, but is as afraid of the character as if it was a sin to make verses. You will be more entertained with what I heard of Lord Edgumbe. Stay, I dare not tell it your ladyship—well, Lord Ossory must read this paragraph. Every scrap of Latin Lord Edgumbe heard at the Encaenia at Oxford he translated ridiculously; one of the themes was *Ars Musica*: he Englished it Bumfiddle.

I wish you joy, Madam, of the sun's settling in England. Was ever such a southern day as this? My house is a bower of tuberoses, and all Twitnamshire is passing through my meadows to the races at Hampton Court. The picture is incredibly beautiful; but I must quit my joys for my sorrows. My poor Rosette is dying. She relapsed into her fits the last night of my stay at Nuneham, and has suffered exquisitely ever since. You may believe I have too; I have been out of bed twenty times every night, have had no sleep, and sat up with her till three this morning; but I am only making you
laugh

laugh at me; I cannot help it—I think of nothing else. Without weaknesses I should not be I, and I may as well tell them as have them tell themselves.

P. S. I am going to make a postscript of a very old riddle, but if you never saw it you will like it, and revere the riddle-maker, which was, I am told, one Sir Isaac Newton, a great star-gazer and conjurer:—

Four people sat down at a table to play;
They play'd all that night, and some part of next day.
This one thing observed, that when they were seated,
Nobody played with them, and nobody betted;
Yet when they got up, each was winner a guinea;
Who tells me this riddle, I'm sure is no ninny.

75. *To the Countess of Upper Ossory*

[Ætæt 55]

Strawberry Hill

Sept. 1, 1773

Your Ladyship was particularly kind in letting me meet so agreeable a letter at my return, which made me for some minutes forget the load of business and mortification that I have brought from Houghton, where I was detained four days longer than I intended. You would I fear repent your love of details, were I to enter on particulars of all I have seen and heard! far worse than my worst apprehensions!

You know, Madam, I do not want a sufficient stock of family pride, yet perhaps do not know, though I think it far from a beautiful place, how very fond I am of Houghton, as the
object

object of my father's fondness. Judge then what I felt at finding it half a ruin, though the pictures, the glorious pictures, and furniture, are in general admirably well preserved. All the rest is destruction and desolation! The two great staircases exposed to all weathers, every room in the wings rotting with wet, the ceiling of the gallery in danger, the chancel of the church unroofed, the water-house built by Lord Pembroke tumbling down, the garden a common, the park half-covered with nettles and weeds, the walls and pales in ruin, perpetuities of livings at the very gates sold, the interest of Lynn gone, mortgages swallowing the estate, and a debt of above 40,000*l.* heaped on those of my father and brother. A crew of banditti were harboured in the house, stables, town and every adjacent tenement; and I had but too great reason to say that the out-pensioners have committed as great spoil—much even since my nephew's misfortune. The high-treasurer who paid this waste and shared it is a steward that can neither read nor write. This worthy prime minister I am forced to keep from particular circumstances—I mean if I continue in office myself; but though I have already done something, and have reduced an annual charge of near 1,200*l.* a year, the consequences of which I believe were as much more—I mean the waste made and occasioned by bad servants, dogs, and horses—still I very much doubt whether I must not resign, from causes not proper for a letter.

In the shock and vexation of such a scene was I forced to act as if my mind was not only perfectly at ease, but as if I, who never understood one useful thing in my days, was master of
every

every country business, and qualified to be a surveyor-general. Though you would have pitied my sensations, you would have smiled, Madam, I am sure, at my occupations, which lasted without interruption from nine every morning till twelve at night, except that a few times I stole from the steward and lawyer I carried with me, to peep at a room full of painters, who you and Lord Ossory will like to hear, are making drawings from the whole collection, which Boydell is going to engrave. Well, the morning was spent in visiting the kennels, in giving away pointers, greyhounds, and foreign beasts, in writing down genealogies of horses—with all my heraldry I never thought to be the Anstis of Newmarket; in selling bullocks, sheep, Shetland horses, and all kind of stock; in hearing petitions and remonstrances of old servants, whom I pitied, though three were drunk by the time I had breakfasted; in listening to advice on raising leases, in ordering repairs, sending two teams to Lynn for tiles, in limiting expense of coals, candles, soap, brushes, &c., and in forty other such details.

About one or two, arrived farmers to haggle on leases, and though I did not understand one word in a score that they uttered, I was forced to keep them to dinner, and literally had three, four, and five to dine with me six days of the eight that I stayed there; nor was I quit so, for their business literally lasted most days till eight or nine at night. They are not laconic, nor I intelligent; and the stupidity and knavery of the steward did their utmost to perplex me and confound the map of the estate, every name in which he miscalled, as if he was interpreting to an Arabian ambassador. The three last hours
of

of the night were employed in reducing and recording the transactions of the day, in looking over accounts and methodizing debts, demands, and in drawing plans of future conduct. Oh, I am weary even with the recollection—is not your Ladyship with the recapitulation? For the first four days I was amazed at the quickness of my own parts, and almost lamented that such talents had lain so long unemployed. I improved two leases 150*l.*, and thought I had raised another more; and let a farm which my Lord kept in his own hands, and has received not a shilling from for seven years, for 500*l.* a year. Alas! I soon found I had been too obstinate or too sanguine, and absolutely had done nothing but blunder. My farmers broke off when I thought them ready to sign, and the second lease I found my Lord had been overreached in, and had engaged for 400*l.*, though I was offered 600*l.* by two different persons. I came away chagrined and humbled.

As King Phiz says in *The Rehearsal*, if I am turned off, nobody will take me; I am glad, therefore, your Ladyship did this time resist your propensity to praising me. I am glad to have done with my own chapter, and to come to your Ladyship's entertaining letter—I should not say entertaining, as you have been a month in apprehension of *you know not what*. I hope Lord Ossory will soon be without apprehension, and see *what* he wishes. Good Madam, do not scamper about like some ladies of antiquity, I forget their country, who thought fatigue 'went half-way in the procreation of a son and heir. I was not so much frightened at Mrs. Page's news; on the contrary

contrary, I was diverted, concluding the antiquated beauty was a lady famous for making ducal captives, and was going to be restored.

Lady Barrymore has, I think, two thousand a year, and I believe will not break her little heart, as you may see I thought by this stanza to the tune of *Green grow the rushes, oh!*

O, my Lady Barrymore,
O, my Lady Barrymore,
If I was you,
I'd bill and coo,
But I would never marry more.

I promise you I will not myself; nor do I think the lady in question will choose another skeleton.

You guessed right, Madam; *musicians* is the key to the riddle.¹ If it is too easy, which I am bound not to think, as I could not guess it, remember Sir Isaac was more famous for solving problems than for wrapping them in obscurity.

I must beg not to have my details mentioned to the Grace of Courts, nor to your jockeyhood. I doubt they would neither touch the one nor reform the other, though such a theme for moralizing. For my part, I sat down by the waters of Babylon, and wept over our Jerusalem—I might almost say, over my father's ashes, on whose gravestone the rain pours!

Adieu! Madam, the reading your letter over again made me cheerful. I shall want many such before the impression made by these last ten days will be obliterated.

Dear

¹ In the preceding letter.

76. To the Rev. William Mason

[Aetat 56]

Arlington Street

Nov. 27, 1773

Dear Sir,—Mr. Stonhewer¹ has sent me, and I have read, your first part of *Gray's Life*, which I was very sorry to part with so soon. Like everything of yours, I like it ten times better upon reading it again. You have with most singular art displayed the talents of my two departed friends² to the fullest advantage; and yet there is a simplicity in your manner, which, like the frame of a fine picture, seems a frame only, and yet is gold. I should say much more in praise, if, as I have told Mr. Stonhewer, I was not aware that I myself must be far more interested in the whole of the narrative than any other living mortal, and therefore may suppose it will please the world still more than it will——. And yet if wit, parts, learning, taste, sense, friendship, information, can strike or amuse mankind, must not this work have that effect,—and yet, though *me* it may affect far more strongly, self-loving certainly has no share in my affection to many parts. Of my two friends and me, I only make a most indifferent figure. I do not mean with regard to parts or talents—I never one instant of my life had the superlative vanity of ranking myself with them. They not only possessed genius, which I have not, great learning which is to be acquired, and which I never acquired

¹ The intimate friend of Gray through whose influence with the Duke of Grafton Gray was made Professor of Modern History at Cambridge.

² Gray and West.—T.

quired; but both Gray and West had abilities marvellously premature. What wretched boyish stuff would my contemporary letters to them appear, if they existed; and which they both were so good-natured as to destroy. What unpoetic things were mine at that age, some of which unfortunately do exist, and which I yet could never surpass; but it is not in that light I consider my own position. We had not got to Calais before Gray was dissatisfied, for I was a boy, and he, though infinitely more a man, was not enough so to make allowances. Hence I am never mentioned once with kindness in his letters to West. This hurts me for him, as well as myself. For the oblique censures on my want of curiosity, I have nothing to say. The fact was true; my eyes were not purely classic; and though I am now a dull antiquary, my age then made me taste pleasures and diversions merely modern: I say this to you, and to you only, in confidence. I do not object to a syllable. I know how trifling, how useless, how blamable I have been, and submit to hear my faults, both because I have had faults, and because I hope I have corrected some of them; and though Gray hints at my unwillingness to be told them, I can say truly that to the end of his life he neither spared the reprimand nor mollified the terms; as you and others know, and I believe have felt.

These reflections naturally arose on reading his letters again, and arose in spite of the pleasure they gave me, for self will intrude, even where self is not so much concerned. I am sorry to find I disobliged Gray so very early. I am sorry for him that it so totally obliterated all my friendship for him; a remark

mark the world probably, and I ~~hope~~, will not make, but which it is natural for me, dear Sir, to say to you. I am so sincerely zealous that all possible honour should be done to my two friends, that I care not a straw for serving as a foil to them. And as confession of faults is the only amendment I can now make to the one disoblged, I am pleased with myself for having consented, and for consenting, as I do, to that public reparation. I thank you for having revived West and his alas! stifled genius, and for having extended Gray's reputation. If the world admires them both as much as they deserved, I shall enjoy their fame; if it does not, I shall comfort myself for standing so prodigiously below them, as I do even without comparison.

There are a few false printings I could have corrected, but of no consequence, as 'Grotto del Cane,' for 'Grotta,' and a few notes I could have added, but also of little consequence. Dodsley, who is printing Lord Chesterfield's *Letters*, will hate you for this publication. I was asked to write a Preface—*Sic notus Ulysses*? I knew Ulysses too well. Besides, I have enough to burn without adding to the mass. Forgive me, if I differ with you, but I cannot think Gray's Latin poems inferior even to his English, at least as I am not a Roman. I wish too that in a note you had referred to West's Ode on the Queen ¹ in Dodsley's *Miscellanies*. *Adieu!* go on and prosper. My poor friends have an historian worthy of them, and who satisfies their and your friend

HOR. WALPOLE.

P. S.

¹ Caroline of Anspach.—T.

P. S. Since I wrote my letter, which is not to go till to-morrow, I have received your letter, and most delightful lines: you are sure I think them so, and should if they were not yours. The subject prejudices me enough, without my affection for your writings. I cannot recollect now (for I lose my memory by having it over-stuffed with business) who told me the story of the blasphemy,¹ and I will never affirm to you anything where I cannot quote my evidence. Perhaps I shall remember; the story however ought not to be lost, and may be reserved for even a twentieth edition; no, I don't know whether there will be a twentieth. If what you tell me of a message be true, there will not be one. I had not heard it, but can easily believe it, and I could tell you exactly what it would cost, and will by word of mouth, if I ever see you again: for though I shall get some courtier to direct this, that it may pass safe, I cannot name my authority in writing. The fact is a secret yet, but will not be so long.

I will send for the *Life* again to Mr. Stonhewer, since the impression is not perfect, and will add two or three corrections and perhaps a note or two, which you may reject if you please. I do not recollect the notes on *Education*,² but will look for them, if I can get to Strawberry Hill next week, but I am demolished both in health and spirits by my poor nephew's affairs. I have neither strength nor understanding to go through them. I sometimes think of throwing them up and
going

¹ The Earl of Bristol said that he would as soon read blasphemy as the *Heroic Epistle*.—T.

² Notes on part of Gray's unfinished poem on the *Alliance of Education and Government*, for which Mason had asked.—T.

going to lay my bones in some free land, while there is such a country. This does not deserve to be so, but *Qui vult tyrannizari tyrannizetur!*

I did not know the Preface to the new Shakespeare was Garrick's, which I suppose is what you mean. He is as fit to write it, as a country curate to compose an excellent sermon from having preached one of Tillotson's. I will send you the volume, and you will return it when you have done with it.

I don't know when the young lady's head will be broken, they say next week. If her heart is not tough and Dutch, that may be broken too.

Saturday

I cannot possibly recollect who told me the story above, but I am certain it was related as an undoubted fact, nor does it sound at all like invention.

77. *To Sir Horace Mann*

[Aetat 56]

Arlington Street

Nov. 28, 1773

Don't commend me yet, my dear Sir; I will be a good man before I die, if it is possible; but at present I am only learning virtues at the expense of all the world. For some time I had wrapped myself up in my indifference and integrity; and hoped the former, like cedar-chips, would preserve the latter, as it lay useless by me in my drawer. The swarms of rogues that my nephew's affairs have let loose upon me oblige me to produce all my little stock of honesty; and all the service I intend

to

to do myself by my endless fatigue, shall be to make myself better. The possession of one vice, pride, and the want of two more, ambition and self-interest, have preserved me from many faults; but into how many more have I fallen! The fruit is past; but the soil shall be improved. I do not talk with a lawyer, that, at the same time, I am not looking into him as a glass, and setting my mind into a handsomer attitude. When he gives me advice, I often say, silently, 'This I will be sure *not* to follow; for, if many try to cheat me, some are as zealous to make me defraud *for* my family; which, though more likely to tempt me than if it was for myself, shall not make me swerve from that narrow middle path, that does exist, but is seldom perceptible, especially as we rarely look for it but through spectacles that we take care should not magnify.'

Oh, my dear Sir, we are wretched and contemptible creatures! Have I not been writing a panegyric here, when I meant a satire on myself, and did not dare to finish it? I am not mercenary, and therefore lash those that are. I pick out a single negative quality, which I happen to be born without, and think that, like charity, it is to cover a multitude of sins! I am a Pharisee, and affect the modest humility of the publican! Well! I give up all pretensions; but I will try to have some positive merit. I never thought of it while I was idle—my life is now a scene of incessant business. I shall never learn my business; but, thank God! virtue is not so intricate as law and farming. My honesty shall not be a sinecure like my places. I will learn economy for my nephew's estate, though I never had it for the care of my own fortune. My pride,—

no, pray let me keep that: if I expect it, seven worse devils will enter in; and I should sell another passion, a very predominant one, the love of liberty. While all the world is selling the thing, pray let me, if but as a *virtuoso*, preserve the affection, which is already a curiosity, and will soon, I believe, be an unique.

Luckily for you, I have not time to talk any longer about myself, which you see one loves to do, even though it be to rail at oneself: indeed, like Montaigne, one contrives to specify no failings without giving them a foil that makes them look like virtues. For my part, I forswear any good qualities; I am mortified at knowing I have none; or, if I have had, and Virtue fathered them, Pride was their mother, and, whoever she laid them to, Hypocrisy was her gallant. Still, if she be not past child-bearing, her husband shall yet have some lawful issue.

You receive my letters very late, unless it may happen that you do not answer soon, for yesterday, November 27, I received yours of the 9th, which mentions getting mine of the 4th. At first I was rejoiced, and did not consider that mine of November 4 could not possibly have reached you, as I wish most earnestly to hear it has—but alas! it was mine of October 4, and what is worse, I find Lady O. is gone to Naples, which will be an excuse for her not answering mine to her this age; though it is of so much consequence that she should determine immediately; and it is still much more unfortunate that you are not where she is, to hasten her decision. Her delay may ruin
all

all, and I hope you have at least wrote to press her, or *the object* I wish to preserve may be gone, as I am told it will be—I hope you understand me. I fear she will be so cunning as to deceive herself, in order to show her cunning. Her son grows worse, for he is more furious and mischievous, and for longer seasons. I will not enter on the theme again now, but I am half-dead with the fatigue, anxiety, difficulty, and unrelaxing trouble this misfortune has brought upon me! It will destroy any talents I have, and already affects my memory, by the multiplicity of new names and new matter with which I am forced to stuff my head, and which crowd out every other idea.

News there is none; and if there were, have I time to hear or remember it? There are scarce three themes. The great one is the Irish absentee tax, which the ministers first espoused, then tried to avoid, and is now likely to be saddled on them by mismanagement at Dublin. They have got too great a majority there, who will carry it for them in spite of England's and Ireland's teeth too.

Lord Holland is dying, is paying Charles Fox's debts, or most of them, for they amount to one hundred and thirty thousand pounds! ay, ay; and has got a grandson and heir. I thought this child a Messiah, who came to foretell the ruin and dispersion of the *Jews*; but while there is a broker or a gamester upon the face of the earth, Charles will not be out of debt. Pray, do your crews of English at Florence emulate their countrymen? I saw a letter the other day from Aix, which

which said a young Englishman there had lost twenty-two thousand pounds at one sitting. Madness and perdition are gone forth! Is it possible that we should not be undone?

I can tell you of two English above the common standard coming to you. The great Indian Verres, or Alexander, if you please, Lord Clive, is one: the other, Lady Mary Coke. She was much a friend of mine, but a late marriage,¹ which *she* particularly disapproved, having flattered herself with the hopes of one just a step higher,² has a little cooled our friendship. In short, though she is so greatly born, she has a frenzy for royalty, and will fall in love with, and at the feet of, the Great Duke and Duchess, especially the former,³ for next to being an Empress herself, she adores the Empress-Queen, or did—for perhaps that passion, not being quite reciprocal, may have waned. However, bating every English person's madness, for every English person must have their madness, Lady Mary has a thousand virtues and good qualities. She is noble, generous, high-spirited, undauntable; is most friendly, sincere, affectionate, and above any mean action. She loves attention, and I wish you to pay it, even for my sake, for I would do anything to serve her. I have often tried to laugh her out of her weakness; but, as she is very serious, she was so in that, and if all the sovereigns in Europe combined to slight her, she still would put her trust in the next generation of princes. Her heart is excellent, and deserves and would become a crown, and
that

¹ Of the Duke of Gloucester and Lady Waldegrave.—WALPOLE.

² She had flattered herself that Edward, Duke of York, elder brother of the Duke of Gloucester, would marry her.—WALPOLE.

³ The Grand Duke was the son of the Empress-Queen Maria Theresa.—T.

that is the best of all excuses for desiring one. I am glad you will have so little trouble with those that are nearer.¹

Thank you a thousand times for your anecdotes of the Jesuits. It is comfortable to see the world ever open its eyes. If it had all Argus's, it would have need to stare with every pair; but I think it was said of them, that some watched while others slept. Just so would the world's, and would say with the sluggard in the Psalms, 'A little more slumber, a little more sleep, a little more folding of the arms to sleep.' The Jesuits have many collaterals, besides other monks. Adieu!

P.S. We have just heard that the tax on Irish absentees has been thrown out even at Dublin.

78. *To the Rev. William Cole*

[*Aetat 56*]

Strawberry Hill

May 28, 1774

Nothing will be more agreeable to me, dear Sir, than a visit from you in July. I will try and persuade Mr. Granger to meet you; and if you had any such thing as summer in the fens, I would desire you to bring a bag with you. We are almost freezing here in the midst of beautiful verdure, with a profusion of blossoms and flowers: but I keep good fires, and seem to feel warm weather while I look through the window, for the way to ensure summer in England is to have it framed and glazed in a comfortable room.

I shall be still more glad to hear you are settled in your
living

¹ The Duke and Duchess of Cumberland, then in Italy.—WALPOLE.

living. Burnham¹ is almost in my neighbourhood, and its being in that of Eton and Windsor will more than console you, I hope, for leaving Ely and Cambridge. Pray let me know the moment you are certain. It would now be a disappointment to me as well as you. You shall be inaugurated in my chapel, which is much more venerable than your parish church, and has the genuine air of antiquity. I bought very little at poor Mr. Bateman's. His nephew disposed of little that was worth house-room, and yet pulled the whole to pieces.

Mr. Pennant² has published a new tour to Scotland and the Hebrides, and, though he has endeavoured to paint their dismal isles and rocks in glowing colours, they will not be satisfied, for he seems no bigot about Ossian, at least in some passages, and is free in others, which their intolerating spirit will resent. I cannot say the book is very entertaining to me, as it is more a book of rates than of antiquities. The most amusing part was communicated to him by Mr. Banks, who found whole islands that bear nothing but columns, as other places do grass and barley. There is a beautiful cave called Fingal's, which proves that nature loves Gothic architecture.

Mr. Pennant has given a new edition of his former tour with more cuts. Among others is the vulgar head called the Countess of Desmond. I told him I had discovered, and proved past contradiction, that it is Rembrandt's mother; he owned it, and said he would correct it by a note—but he has not. This is a
brave

¹ Cole succeeded his half-brother, Dr. Apthorpe, as vicar of Burnham in Buckinghamshire in June, 1774.—T.

² Thomas Pennant (1726-1798). He visited Scotland in 1769 and 1772, and published accounts of both tours.—T.

brave way of being an antiquary; as if there could be any merit in giving for genuine what one knows is spurious. He is, indeed, a superficial man, and knows little of history or antiquity—but he has a violent rage for being an author. He set out with ornithology, and a little natural history, and picks up his knowledge as he rides. I have a still lower idea of Mr. Gough; for Mr. Pennant, at least, is very civil. The other is a hog. Mr. Fenn, another smatterer in antiquity, but a very good sort of man, told me Mr. Gough desired to be introduced to me—but as he has been such a bear to you, he shall not come. The Society of Antiquaries put me in mind of what the old Lord Pembroke said to Anstis the herald: ‘Thou silly fellow, thou dost not know thy own silly business.’ If they went beyond taste by poking into barbarous ages when there was no taste, one could forgive them—but they catch at the first ugly thing they see, and take it for old, because it is new to them, and then usher it pompously into the world as if they had made a discovery, though they have not yet cleared up a single point that is of the least importance, or that tends to settle any obscure passage in history.

I will not condole with you on having had the gout, since you find it has removed other complaints. Besides, as it begins late, you are never likely to have it severely. I shall be in terrors in two or three months, having had the four last fits periodically and biennially. Indeed, the two last were so long and severe, that my remaining and shattered strength could ill support such.

I must repeat how glad I shall be to have you at Burnham.

When

When people grow old, as you^u and I do, they should get together. Others do not care for us, but we seem wiser to one another by finding fault with them—not that I am apt to dislike young folks, whom I think everything becomes; but it is a kind of self-defence to live in a body. I dare to say that monks never find out that they grow old fools. Their age gives them authority, and nobody contradicts them. In the world, one cannot help perceiving one is out of fashion. Women play at cards with women of their own standing, and censure others between the deals, and thence conclude themselves Gamaliels. I, who see many young men with better parts than myself, submit with a good grace, or retreat hither to my castle, where I am satisfied with what I have done, and am always in good humour; but I like to have one or two old friends with me—I do not much invite the juvenile, who think my castle and me of equal antiquity, for no wonder, if they suppose that George I lived in the time of the Crusades. Adieu! my good Sir, and pray let Burnham Wood and Dunsinane be good neighbours.

Yours ever,

HOR. WALPOLE.

79. *To the Countess of Upper Ossory*

[Aetat 56]

Strawberry Hill

Sept. 14, 1774

Madam,—‘Methinks an Aesop’s fable you relate,’ as Dryden says in *The Hind and Panther*. A mouse that wraps itself
in

in a French cloak and sleeps on a couch; and a goldfinch that taps at the window and swears it will come in to quadrille at eleven o'clock at night! no, no, these are none of Aesop's cattle; they are too fashionable to have lived so near the Creation. The mouse is neither country mouse nor city mouse; and whatever else he may be, the goldfinch must be a Maccaroni, or at least of the *Sçavoir vivre*.¹ I do not deny but I have some skill in expounding types and portents; and could give a shrewd guess at the identical persons who have travestied themselves into a quadruped and biped; but the truth is, I have no mind, Madam, to be Prime Minister. King Pharaoh is mighty apt on emergencies to send for us soothsayers, and put the whole kingdom into our hands, if his butler or baker, with whom he is wont to gossip, does but tell him of a cunning man.

I have no ambition to supplant Lord North—especially as the season approaches when I dread the gout; and I should be very sorry to be fetched out of my bed to pacify America. To be sure, Madam, you give me a fair field for uttering oracles: however, all I will unfold is, that the emblematic animals have no views on Lady Louisa. The omens of her fortune are in herself; and I will burn my books, if beauty, sense, and merit do not bestow all the happiness on her they prognosticate.

I can as little agree to the Duchess of M.'s solution of the Duchess of L.'s marriage, which, by the way, is at least not over yet. Nor do I believe, *whatever mamma knows*, that she will agree to it either; and, for this reason, the efficacy of pregnancy

¹ A fashionable club.—T.

pregnancy on a delicate constitution is no lasting nostrum. A husband would be but a temporary preservative, and useless, when the operations of the remedy could not possibly be of any service. Alas! is a poor sick lady to leave off the drug when it can no longer produce the wholesome tumour on the patient!

I doubt the Duchess of M. did not advert to the vicinity of that hopeless season in the Duchess of L., or I think her Grace would not have laid down a position from which such disagreeable consequences might be drawn.

I like the blue eyes, Madam, better than the denomination of Lady Gertrude Fitzpatrick, which, all respectable as it is, is very harsh and rough sounding; pray let her change it with the first goldfinch that offers. Nay, I do not even trust to the blueth of the eyes. I do not believe they last once in twenty times. One cannot go into any village fifty miles from London without seeing a dozen little children with flaxen hair and eyes of sky-blue. What becomes of them all? One does not see a grown Christian with them twice in a century, except in poetry.

The Strawberry Gazette is very barren of news. Mr. Garrick has the gout, which is of more consequence to the metropolis than to Twitnamshire. Lady Hertford dined here last Saturday, brought her loo party, and stayed supper; there were Lady Mary Coke, Mrs. Howe, and the Colonels Maude and Keene. This was very heroic, for one is robbed every hundred yards. Lady Hertford herself was attacked last Wednesday on Hounslow Heath at three in the afternoon,
but

but she had two servants on horseback, who would not let her be robbed, and the highwayman decamped.

The greatest event I know was a present I received last Sunday, just as I was going to dine at Lady Blandford's, to whom I sacrificed it. It was a bunch of grapes as big—as big—as that the two spies carried on a pole to Joshua; for spies in those days, when they robbed a vineyard, were not at all afraid of being overtaken. In good truth this bunch weighed three pounds and a half, *côte rôtie* measure; and was sent to me by my neighbour Prado, of the tribe of Issachar, who is descended from one of aforesaid spies, but a good deal richer than his ancestor. Well, Madam, I carried it to the Marchioness, but gave it to the *maître d'hôtel*, with injunctions to conceal it till the dessert. At the end of dinner, Lady Blandford said she had heard of three immense bunches of grapes at Mr. Prado's at a dinner he had made for Mr. Ellis. I said those things were always exaggerated. She cried, Oh! but Mrs. Ellis told it, and it weighed I don't know how many pounds, and the Duke of Argyle had been to see the hothouse, and she wondered, as it was so near, I would not go and see it. 'Not I, indeed,' said I; 'I dare to say there is no curiosity in it.' Just then entered the gigantic bunch. Everybody screamed. 'There,' said I, 'I will be shot if Mr. Prado has such a bunch as yours.' In short she suspected Lady Egremont, and the adventure succeeded to admiration. If you will send the Bedfordshire waggon, Madam, I will beg a dozen grapes for you.

Mr. Barker may pretend what he will, but if he liked Strawberry Hill so well, he would have visited it again, and by
daylight

daylight. He could see no more of it at nine o'clock at night than he does at this moment.

Pray, Madam, is not it Farming Woods' ¹ tide? Who is to have the care of the dear mouse in your absence? I wish I could spare Margaret, who loves all creatures so well that she would have been happy in the ark, and sorry when the Deluge ceased; unless people had come to see Noah's old house, which she would have liked still better than cramming his menagerie.

Postscript, *entre nous*. Have you heard that certain verses have been read inadvertently to the D. of Gr.? ² I long to know, but cannot learn who was the ingenious person.

80. *To the Rev. William Mason*

[Aetat 56]

Strawberry Hill

Sept. 16, 1774

What is the commonest thing in the world?—Lord! how can you be so dull as not to guess? why to be sure, to hunt for a thing forty times, and give it over, and then find it when you did not look for it, exactly where you had hunted forty times. This happened to me this very morning, and overjoyed I am. I suppose you don't guess what I have found? Really, Mr. Mason, you great poets are so absent, and so unlike the rest of the world! Why what should I have found, but the thing in the world that was most worth finding? a hidden treasure—a hidden fig; no, Sir, not the certificate of the Duchess of Kingston's first marriage, nor the lost books of

Livy

¹ Lord Ossory's seat in Northamptonshire.—T.

² The Duke of Grafton, Lady Ossory's former husband.—T.

Livy, nor the longitude, nor the philosopher's stone, nor all Charles Fox has lost. I tell you it is what I have searched for a thousand times, and had rather have found than the longitude, if it was a thousand times longer. Oh, you do guess, do you? I thought I never lost anything in my life. I was sure I had them, and so I had; and now am I not a good soul, to sit down and send you a copy incontinently? Don't be too much obliged to me neither. I am in a panic till there are more copies than mine, and as the post does not go till tomorrow, I am in terror lest the house should be burnt to-night. I have a mind to go and bury a transcript in the field; but then if I should be burnt too! nobody would know where to look for it. Well, here it is! I think your decorum will not hold it proper to be printed in the *Life*, nor would I have it. We will preserve copies, and the devil is in it, if some time or other it don't find its way to the press. My copy is in his own handwriting; but who could doubt it: I know but one man upon earth who could have written it but Gray.¹

81. *To John Craufurd*²

[Ætæt 56]

Strawberry Hill

Sept. 26, 1774

You tell me to write to you, and I am certainly disposed to do anything I can to amuse you; but that is not so easy a matter, for two very good reasons: you are not the most amusable

¹ The original letter ends with a copy of Gray's verses, *Jemmy Twitcher: or, the Cambridge Courtship*, and a suggestion that the coarseness of the last two lines should be modified.—T.

² John Craufurd (d. 1814.). He was well known in French and English society, and was a friend and correspondent of Madame du Deffand.—T.

amusable of men, and I have ~~nothing~~ to amuse you with, for you are like electricity, you attract and repel at once; and though you have at first a mind to know anything, you are tired of it before it can be told. I don't go to Almack's nor amongst your acquaintance. Would you bear to hear of mine? of Lady Blandford, Lady Anne Conolly, and the Duchess of Newcastle? for by age and situation I live at this time of year with nothing but old women. They do very well for me who have little choice left, and who rather prefer common nonsense to wise nonsense—the only difference I know between old women and old men. I am out of all politics, and never think of elections, which I think I should hate even if I loved politics; just as if I loved tapestry I do not think I could talk over the manufacture of worsteds. Books I have almost done with too; at least, read only such as nobody else would read. In short, my way of life is too insipid to entertain anybody but myself, and though I am always employed, I must say I think I have given up everything in the world only to be at liberty to be very busy about the most arrant trifles.

Well! I have made out half a letter with a history very like the journal in the *Spectator*, of the man, the chief incidents of whose life were stroking his cat, and walking to Hampstead. Last night, indeed, I had an adventure that would make a great figure in such a narrative. *You* may be enjoying bright suns and serene horizons under the Pole, but in this dismal southern region it has rained for this month without interruption. Lady Browne and I dined as usually on Sundays with Lady Blandford. Our gentle Thames was swelled in the morning

morning to a very respectable magnitude, and we had thought of returning by Kew Bridge; however, I persuaded her to try if we could not ferry, and when we came to the foot of the hill, the bargemen told us the water was sunk. We embarked and had four men to push the ferry. The night was very dark, for though the moon was up, we could neither see her, nor she us. The bargemen were drunk, the poles would scarce reach the bottom, and in five minutes the rapidity of the current turned the barge round, and in an instant we were at Isleworth. The drunkest of the men cried out, 'She is gone, she is lost!' meaning they had lost the management. Lady Browne fell into an agony, began screaming and praying to Jesus, and every land and water god and goddess, and I, who expected not to stop till we should run against Kew Bridge, was contriving how I should get home; or what was worse, whether I must not step into some mud up to my middle, be wet through, and get the gout. With much ado they recovered the barge and turned it; but then we ran against the piles of the new bridge, which startled the horses, who began kicking. My Phillis's terrors increased, and I thought every minute she would have begun confession. Thank you, you need not be uneasy; in ten minutes we landed very safely, and if we had been drowned, I am too exact not to have dated my letter from the bottom of the Thames. There! there's a letter; I think you would not want to read such another, even if written to somebody else.

Yours ever,

H. W.

P. S.

P. S. Pontdeyvelde is dead, and our friend ¹ fancies she is more sorry than she fancied she would be: but it will make a vacuum in her room rather than in her entertainment.

Arlington Street

Sept. 29

This letter, which should have gone two days ago, but I had no direction, will come untimely, for you will be up to the ears in your canvass,² as the Parliament is to be dissolved the day after to-morrow.

82. *To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway and the Countess of Ailesbury*

[Aetat 57]

Arlington Street

Jan. 15, 1775

You have made me very happy by saying your journey to Naples is laid aside. Perhaps it made too great an impression on me; but you must reflect, that all my life I have satisfied myself with your being perfect, instead of trying to be so myself. I don't ask you to return, though I wish it: in truth, there is nothing to invite you. I don't want you to come and breathe fire and sword against the Bostonians, like that second Duke of Alva, the inflexible Lord George Germain; or to anathematize the court and all its works, like the incorruptible Burke, who scorns lucre, except when he can buy a hundred thousand acres from naked Caribs for a song. I don't want
you

¹ Madame du Deffand.

² Craufurd was elected for Renfrewshire on Oct. 24, 1774.

you to do anything like a party-man. I trust you think of every party as I do, with contempt, from Lord Chatham's mustard-bowl down to Lord Rockingham's hartshorn. All, perhaps, will be tried in their turns, and yet, if they had genius, might not be mighty enough to save us. From some ruin or other I think nobody can, and what signifies an option of mischiefs?

An account is come of the Bostonians having voted an army of sixteen thousand men, who are to be called *minute-men*, as they are to be ready at a minute's warning. Two directors or commissioners, I don't know what they are called, are appointed. There has been too a kind of mutiny in the Fifth Regiment. A soldier was found drunk on his post. Gage, in this time of *danger*, thought rigour necessary, and sent the fellow to a court-martial. They ordered two hundred lashes. The General ordered them to improve their sentence. Next day it was published in the *Boston Gazette*. He called them before him, and required them on oath to abjure the communication: three officers refused. Poor Gage is to be scapegoat,¹ not for this, but for what was a reason against employing him, incapacity. I wonder at the precedent! Howe² is talked of for his successor.—Well, I have done with *you*!—Now I shall gossip with Lady Ailesbury.

You must know, Madam, that near Bath is erected a new Parnassus, composed of three laurels, a myrtle-tree, a weeping-willow, and a view of the Avon, which has been new christened

¹ Gage was not deprived of command on this occasion.—T.

² Major-General Hon. William Howe; he was sent out with reinforcements for Gage in March, 1775.—T.

christened Helicon. Ten years ago there lived a Madam Riggs, an old rough humourist who passed for a wit; her daughter, who passed for nothing, married to a Captain Miller, full of good-natured officiousness. These good folks were friends of Miss Rich, who carried me to dine with them at Bath-Easton, now Pindus. They caught a little of what was then called taste, built and planted, and begot children, till the whole caravan were forced to go abroad to retrieve. Alas! Mrs. Miller is returned a beauty, a genius, a Sappho, a tenth Muse, as romantic as Mademoiselle Scudéri, and as sophisticated as Mrs. Vesey. The Captain's fingers are loaded with cameos, his tongue runs over with *virtù*, and that both may contribute to the improvement of their own country, they have introduced *bouts-rimés* as a new discovery. They hold a Parnassus fair every Thursday, give out rhymes and themes, and all the flux of quality at Bath contend for the prizes. A Roman vase dressed with pink ribbons and myrtles receives the poetry, which is drawn out every festival; six judges of these Olympic games retire and select the brightest compositions, which the respective successful acknowledge, kneel to Mrs. Calliope Miller, kiss her fair hand, and are crowned by it with myrtle, with—I don't know what. You may think this is fiction, or exaggeration. Be dumb, unbelievers! The collection is printed, published.—Yes, on my faith! There are *bouts-rimés* on a buttered muffin, made by her Grace the Duchess of Northumberland; receipts to make them by Corydon the venerable, *alias* George Pitt; others very pretty, by Lord Palmerston; some by Lord Carlisle; many by Mrs. Miller herself

herself, that have no fault but wanting metre; and immortality promised to her without end or measure. In short, since folly, which never ripens to madness but in this hot climate, ran distracted, there never was anything so entertaining or so dull—for you cannot read so long as I have been telling.¹

83. *To Robert Jephson*²

[Ætæt 57]

February 1775

You have drawn more trouble on yourself, Sir, than you expected; and would probably excuse my not performing the rest of my promise: but though I look upon myself as engaged to send you my thoughts, you are neither bound to answer them, nor regard them. They very likely are not new, and it is presumption in me to send hints to a much abler writer than myself. I can only plead in apology, that I interest myself in your fame; and as you are the only man capable of restoring and improving our stage, I really mean no more than to exhort and lead you on to make use of your great talents.

I have told you, as is true, that I am no poet. It is as true that you are a genuine one; and therefore I shall not say one word on that head. For the construction of a drama—it is mechanic, though much depends on it. A by-stander may be a good director at least; for mechanism certainly is independent of, though easily possessed by, a genius. Banks never wrote

SIX

¹ The rest of this letter is omitted.

² In his *Short Notes of my Life*, under the year 1775, Walpole records: 'In February wrote the Epilogue to Braganza; and three letters to the author, Mr. Jephson, on tragedy.'—T. This letter is the third.

six tolerable lines, yet disposed his fable with so much address, that I think three plays have been constructed on his plot of the Earl of Essex, not one of which is much better than the original. The disposition is the next step to the choice of a subject, on which I have said enough in a former letter. A genius can surmount defects in both. If there is art in *Othello* and *Macbeth*, it seems to have been by chance; for Shakespeare certainly took no pains to adjust a plan, and in his historic plays seems to have turned Hollinshed and Stowe into verse and scenes as fast as he could write—though every now and then divine genius flashed upon particular scenes and made them immortal; as in his *King John*, where nature itself has stamped the scenes of Constance, Arthur and Hubert with her own impression, though the rest is as defective as possible. He seems to recall the Mahometan idea of lunatics, who are sometimes inspired, oftener changelings. Yet what signifies all his rubbish? He has scenes, and even speeches, that are infinitely superior to all the correct elegance of Racine. I had rather have written the two speeches of Lady Percy, in the second part of *Henry IV*, than all Voltaire, though I admire the latter infinitely, especially in *Alzire*, *Mahomet*, and *Semiramis*. Indeed, when I think over all the great authors of the Greeks, Romans, Italians, French, and English (and I know no other languages), I set Shakespeare first and alone, and then begin anew.

Well, Sir, I give up Shakespeare's dramas; and yet prefer him to every man. Why? For his exquisite knowledge of the passions and nature; for his simplicity, too, which he
possesses

possesses too when most natural. Dr. Johnson says he is bombast whenever he attempts to be sublime: but this is never true but when he aims at sublimity in the expression; the glaring fault of Johnson himself.—But as simplicity is the grace of sublime, who possesses it like Shakespeare? Is not the

‘Him, wondrous Him!’

in Lady Percy’s speech, exquisitely sublime and pathetic too? He has another kind of sublime which no man ever possessed but he; and this is, his art in dignifying a vulgar or trivial expression. Voltaire is so grossly ignorant and tasteless as to condemn this, as to condemn *the bare bodkin*.—But my enthusiasm for Shakespeare runs away with me.

I was speaking of the negligence of his construction. You have not that fault. I own I do not admire your choice of *Braganza*, because in reality it admits of but two acts, the conspiracy and the revolution. You have not only filled it out with the most beautiful dialogue, but made the interest rise, though the revolution has succeeded. I can never too much admire the appearance of the friar, which disarms Velasquez: and yet you will be shocked to hear that, notwithstanding all I could say at the rehearsal, I could not prevail to have Velasquez drop the dagger instantly, the only artful way of getting it out of his hand; for as Lady P— observed, if he kept it two moments, he would recollect that it was the only way of preserving himself. But actors are not always judges. They persisted, for show-sake, against my remonstrances, to exhibit
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the Duke and Duchess on a throne in the second act; which could not but make the audience conclude that the revolution had even then taken place.

If I could find a fault in your tragedy, Sir, it would be a want of more short speeches, of a sort of serious repartee, which gives great spirit. But I think the most of what I have to say may be comprised in a recommendation of keeping the audience in suspense, and of touching the passions by the pathetic familiar. By the latter, I mean the study of Shakespeare's strokes of nature, which, soberly used, are alone superior to poetry, and, with your ear, may easily be made harmonious.

If there is any merit in my play,¹ I think it is in interrupting the spectator's fathoming the whole story till the last, and in making every scene tend to advance the catastrophe. These arts are mechanic, I confess; but at least they are as meritorious as the scrupulous delicacy of the French in observing, not only the unities, but a fantastic decorum, that does not exist in nature, and which consequently reduce all their tragedies, wherever the scene may lie, to the manners of modern Paris. Corneille could be Roman; Racine, never but French, and consequently, though a better poet, less natural and less various. Both indeed have prodigious merit. *Phèdre*² is exquisite, *Britannicus*² admirable; and both excite pity and terror. Corneille is scarce ever tender, but always grand; yet never equal in a whole play to Racine. *Rodogune*,³ which I greatly admire, is very defective; for the two Princes are so equally good, and
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¹ *The Mysterious Mother.*

² By Racine.

³ By Corneille.

the two women so very bad, that they divide both our esteem and indignation. Yet I own, Racine, Corneille, and Voltaire ought to rank before all our tragedians, but Shakespeare. *Jane Shore*¹ is perhaps our best play after his. I admire *All for Love*² very much; and some scenes in *Don Sebastian*³ and Young's *Revenge*.⁴ *The Siege of Damascus*⁵ is very pure—and *Phædra and Hippolitus*⁶ fine poetry, though wanting all the nature of the original. We have few other tragedies of signal merit, though the four first acts of *The Fair Penitent*⁷ are very good. It is strange that Dryden, who showed such a knowledge of nature in *The Cock and Fox*, should have so very little in his plays—he could rather describe it than put into action. I have said all this, Sir, only to point out to you what a field is open to you—and though so many subjects, almost all the known, are exhausted, nature is inexhaustible, and genius can achieve anything. We have a language far more energetic, and more sonorous too, than the French. Shakespeare could do what he would with it in its unpolished state. Milton gave it pomp from the Greek, and softness from the Italian; Waller now and then, here and there, gave it the elegance of the French. Dryden poured music into it; Prior gave it ease; and Gray used it masterly for either elegy or terror. Examine, Sir, the powers of a language you command, and let me again recommend

¹ By Nicholas Rowe (1714).

² By Dryden (1678).

³ By Dryden (1690).

⁴ By Edward Young (1721).

⁵ By John Hughes (1720).

⁶ By Edmund Smith (1707), based on Racine's *Phèdre*; the prologue was written by Addison, and the epilogue by Prior.—T.

⁷ By Rowe. (1708).

recommend to you a diction of your own,¹ at least in some one play. The majesty of *Paradise Lost* would have been less imposing, if it had been written in the style of *The Essay on Man*. Pope pleases, but never surprises; and astonishment is one of the Springs of tragedy. *Coups de théâtre*, like the sublime one in *Mahomet*, have infinite effect. The incantations in *Macbeth*, that almost border on the burlesque, are still terrible. What French criticism can wound the ghosts of Hamlet or Banquo? Scorn rules, Sir, that cramp genius, and substitute delicacy to imagination in a barren language. Shall we not soar, because the French dare not rise from the ground?

You seem to possess the *tender*. The *terrible* is still more easy, at least I know to me. In all my tragedy, Adeliza contents me the least. Contrasts, though mechanic too, are very striking; and though Molière was a comic writer, he might give lessons to a tragic. But I have passed all bounds; and yet shall be glad if you can cull one useful hint out of my rhapsodies. I here put an end to them; and wish, out of all I have said, that you may remember nothing, Sir, but my motives in writing, obedience to your commands, and a hearty eagerness for fixing on our stage so superior a writer.

I am, Sir,

With great esteem and truth,

Your most obedient humble servant

HOR. WALPOLE.

P. S.—I must beg you, Sir, not to let these letters go out of
your

¹ Mr. Jephson followed this advice in his *Law of Lombardy*—but was not happy in his attempt.—WALPOLE.

your hands; for they are full of indigested thoughts, some perhaps capricious, as those on novel diction—but I wish to tempt genius out of the beaten road; and originality is the most captivating evidence of it.

84. *To the Rev. William Mason*

[Ætæt 57]

Arlington Street

April 3, 1775

Well! your book¹ is walking the town in midday. How it is liked I do not yet know. Were I to judge from my own feelings, I should say there never was so entertaining or interesting a work: that it is the most perfect model of biography; and must make Tacitus, and Agricola too, detest you. But as the world and simple I are not often of the same opinion, it will perhaps be thought very dull. If it is, all we can do is to appeal to that undutiful urchin, Posterity, who commonly treats the judgement of its parents with contempt, though it has so profound a veneration for its most distant ancestors. As you have neither imitated the teeth-breaking diction of Johnson, nor coined slanders against the most virtuous names in story, like modern historians, you cannot expect to please the reigning taste. Few persons have had time, from their politics, diversions, and gaming, to have read much of so large a volume, which they will keep for the summer, when they have full as much of nothing to do. Such as love poetry, or think themselves poets, will have hurried to the verses and been disappointed

¹ *The Life of Gray.*—T.

appointed at not finding half a dozen more Elegies in a Churchyard. A few fine gentlemen will have read one or two of the shortest letters, which not being exactly such as they write themselves, they will dislike or copy next post; they who wish or intend to find fault with Gray, you, or even me, have, to be sure, skimmed over the whole, except the Latin, for even spite, *non est tanti*—. The reviewers, no doubt, are already writing against you; not because they have read the whole, but because one's own name is always the first thing that strikes one in a book. The Scotch will be more deliberate, but not less angry; and if not less angry, not more merciful. Every Hume, however spelt, will I don't know what do; I should be sorry to be able to guess what. I have already been asked why I did not prevent publication of the censure on David? The truth is (as you know) I never saw the whole together till now, and not that part; and if I had, why ought I to have prevented it? Voltaire will cast an *imbelle* javelin *sine ictu* at Gray, for he loves to depreciate a *dead* great author, even when unprovoked,—even when he has commended him alive, or before he was so vain and so envious as he is now. The Rousseaurians will imagine that I interpolated the condemnation of his Eloïse. In short, we shall have many sins laid to our charge, of which we are innocent; but what can the malicious say against the innocent but what is not true?

I am here in brunt to the storm; you sit serenely aloof and smile at its sputtering. So should I, too, were I out of sight, but I hate to be stared at, and the object of whispers before my face. The Maccaronis will laugh out, for you say I am
still

still in the fashionable world.—‘What!’ they will cry, as they read while their hair is curling,—‘that old soul’; for old and old-fashioned are synonymous in the vocabulary of mode, alas! Nobody is so sorry as I to be in the world’s fashionable purlieus; still, in truth, all this is a joke and touches me little. I seem to myself a Strulbrug, who have lived past my time, and see almost my own life written before my face while I am yet upon earth, and as it were the only one of my contemporaries with whom I began the world. Well; in a month’s time there will be little question of Gray, and less of me. America and feathers and masquerades will drive us into libraries, and there I am well content to live as an humble companion to Gray and you; and, thank my stars, not on the same shelf with the Macphersons and Dalrymples.

One omission I have found, at which I wonder; you do not mention Gray’s study of physic, of which he had read much, and I doubt to his hurt. I had not seen till now that delightful encomium on Cambridge, when empty of its inhabitants. It is as good as anything in the book, and has that true humour, which I think equal to any of his excellencies. So has the apostrophe to Nicholls, ‘Why, you monster, I shall never be dirty and amused as long as I live,’ but I will not quote any more, though I shall be reading it and reading it for the rest of my life.

But come, here is a task you must perform, and forthwith, and if you will not write to me, you shall *transcribble* to me, or I will *combustle* you. Send me incontinently all the proper names that are omitted. You know how I love writing marginal

ginal notes in my books, and there is not a word in or out of the book of which I will be ignorant. To save you trouble, here is a list of who is's. Page 152, fill up the asterisks; do. p. 174, do. 206, do. 232, 249, Peer who is it; 250? do.; the Lady of Quality? 251; the leader, 275; who the asterisk, 282? the Dr. who, 283? do. 284; the B.'s and E.'s 288, where, whose is Stratton? 290, Lord?

You see my queries are not very numerous. If you do not answer them I will not tell you a syllable of what the *fashionable* say of your book, and I do not believe you have another correspondent amongst them. At present they are labouring through a very short work, more peculiarly addressed to them, at least to a respectable part of them, the Jockey Club, who, to the latter's extreme surprise, have been consulted on a point of honour by Mr. Fitzgerald, which, however, he has already decided himself with as little conscience as they could do in their most punctilious moments.

If you will satisfy me, I will tell you the following *bon mot* of Foote, but be sure you don't read what follows till you have obeyed my commands. Foote was at Paris in October, when *Dr. Murray* was, who *admiring* or *dreading* his wit (for commentators dispute on the true reading) often invited him to dinner with his nephew. The Ambassador produced a very small bottle of Tokay, and dispensed it in very small glasses. The uncle, to prove how precious every drop, said it was of the most exquisite growth, and very old. Foote, taking up the diminutive glass, and examining it, replied, 'It is very little of its

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its age.' Return me my story if you don't perform the conditions. I wish I could send you anybody's else life to write!

85. To the Rev. William Cole

[*Ætæt 57*]

Arlington Street

April 25, 1775

The least I can do, dear Sir, in gratitude for the cargo of prints I have received to-day from you, is to send you a medicine. A pair of bootikins will set out to-morrow morning in the machine that goes from the Queen's Head in Gray's Inn Lane. To be certain, you had better send for them where the machine inns, lest they should neglect delivering them at Milton. My not losing a moment shows my zeal—but if you can bear a little pain, I should not press you to use them. I have suffered so dreadfully, that I constantly wear them to diminish the stock of gout in my constitution; but as your fit is very slight, and will not last, and as you are pretty sure by its beginning so late that you will never have much; and as the gout certainly carries off other complaints, had not you better endure a little, when it is rather a remedy than a disease? I do not desire to be entirely delivered from the gout, for all reformations do but make room for some new grievance; and, in my opinoin, a disorder that requires no physician is preferable to any that does. However, I have put relief in your power, and you will judge for yourself. You must tie them as tight as you can bear, the flannel next to the flesh; and when you take them off, it should be in bed. Rub your feet with a
warm

warm cloth, and put on warm stockings, for fear of catching cold while the pores are open. It would kill anybody but me, who am of adamant, to walk out into the dew in winter in my slippers in half an hour after pulling off the bootikins. A physician sent me word, good-naturedly, that there was danger of catching cold after the bootikins, unless one was careful. I thanked him, but told him my precaution was, never taking any. All the winter I pass five days in a week without walking out, and sit often by the fireside till seven in the evening. When I do go out, whatever the weather is, I go with both glasses of the coach down, and so I do at midnight out of the hottest room. I have not had a single cold, however slight, these two years.

You are too candid in submitting at once to my defence of Mr. Mason. It is true I am more charmed with his book than I almost ever was with one. I find more people like the grave letters than those of humour, and some think the latter a little affected, which is as wrong a judgement as they could make; for Gray never wrote anything easily but things of humour. Humour was his natural and original turn—and though, from his childhood, he was grave and reserved, his genius led him to see things ludicrously and satirically; and though his health and dissatisfaction gave him low spirits, his melancholy turn was much more affected than his pleasantry in writing. You knew him enough to know I am in the right—but the world in general always wants to be told how to think, as well as what to think. The print,¹ I agree with you, though like, is

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¹ The print prefixed to the 4to edition of the *Memoirs of Gray*.—T.

a very disagreeable likeness, and the worst likeness of him. It gives the primness he had when under constraint; and there is a blackness in the countenance which was like him only the last time I ever saw him, when I was much struck with it; and, though I did not apprehend him in danger, it left an impression on me that was uneasy, and almost prophetic of what I heard but too soon after leaving him. Wilson drew the picture under much such impression, and I could not bear it in my room; Mr. Mason altered it a little, but still it is not well, nor gives any idea of the determined virtues of his heart. It just serves to help the reader to an image of the person whose genius and integrity they must admire, if they are so happy as to have a taste for either.

The peep into the gardens at Twickenham is a silly little book, of which a few little copies were printed some years ago for presents, and which now sets up for itself as a vendible book. It is a most inaccurate, superficial, blundering account of Twickenham and other places, drawn up by a Jewess, who has married twice, and turned Christian, poetess, and authoress. She has printed her poems, too, and one complimentary copy of mine, which in good breeding I could not help sending her in return for violent compliments in verse to me. I do not remember that her's were good; mine I know were very bad, and certainly never intended for the press.

I bought the first volume of Manchester, but could not read it; it was much too learned for me; and seemed rather an account of Babel than Manchester; I mean in point of antiquity. To be sure, it is very kind in an author to promise one
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the history of a country town, and give one a circumstantial account of the antediluvian world into the bargain. But I am simple and ignorant, and desire no more than I pay for. And then for my progenitors, Noah and the Saxons, I have no curiosity about them. Bishop Lyttelton used to plague me to death with barrows, and tumuli, and Roman camps, and all those bumps in the ground that do not amount to a most imperfect ichnography; but, in good truth, I am content with all arts when perfected, nor inquire how ingeniously people contrived to do without them—and I care still less for remains of art that retain no vestiges of art. Mr. Bryant, who is sublime in unknown knowledge, diverted me more, yet I have not finished his work, no more than he has. There is a great ingenuity in discovering all history (though it has never been written) by etymologies. Nay, he convinced me that the Greeks had totally mistaken all they went to learn in Egypt, &c., by doing, as the French do still, judge wrong by the ear—but as I have been trying now and then for above forty years to learn something, I have not time to unlearn it all again, though I allow this is our best sort of knowledge. If I should die when I am not clear in the History of the World below its first three thousand years, I should be at a sad loss on meeting with Homer and Hesiod, or any of those *moderns* in the Elysian fields, before I knew what I ought to think of them.

Pray do not betray my ignorance: the reviewers and such litterati have called me *a learned and ingenious gentleman*. I am sorry they ever heard my name, but don't let them know how irreverently I speak of the erudite, whom I dare to say
they

they admire. These wasps, I suppose, will be very angry at the just contempt Mr. Gray had for them, and will, as insects do, attempt to sting, in hopes that their twelve-penny readers will suck a little venom from the momentary tumour they raise—but good night—and once more, thank you for the prints.

Yours ever,

H. W.

86. *To the Rev. William Mason*

[Ætæt 57]

Strawberry Hill

May 7, 1775

Of all the birds in the air, I like a Freemason best, and next a physician that gives one pills to purge melancholy. I am content to be sick, when my medicines are palatable. I remember the first words of a letter I wrote to you into Suffolk, and if you do too, repeat them if possible with exaggeration.

You are the idlest of beings, and never set pen to paper, or I am an indefatigable correspondent, and plague you with my letters. I cannot help it. Not that I have anything to say, or any reason for not waiting to hear from you. The reviews do not know yet what to say to your book, and so have not mentioned it; probably they are afraid of stumbling over the Aeolian harp again, and are weighing every word they write in a pair of lexicon-scales. Lord Nuneham, who maintained to me at first that everybody was charmed with your work, does own now that some folks begin to carp at it, had cause to dislike it, have had time to whisper their prejudices, no
matter

matter. Its merit does not depend on the competence of the present age: you have fixed the method of biography, and whoever will write a life well must imitate you.

You have done another service that you are not aware of. I, who, simpleton as I was, loved to be an author, am so ashamed of my own stuff, and so convinced that nobody but you and Gray could write, have taken shame to myself, and forsworn the press; yet as I cannot be idle, it is impossible, I have invented a new and very harmless way of *making books*, which diverts me as well, and brings me to no disgrace. I have just made a *new book*, which costs me only money, which I don't value, and time, which I love to employ. It is a volume of etchings by *noble authors*. They are bound in robes of crimson and gold: the titles are printed at my own press, and the pasting is *by my own hand*. What I shall *compose* next I do not know. As you too seem to have given over writing, I wish you would draw for me, or etch; but with your variety of talents, perhaps you are making another match between two musical instruments. Is Mynheer Drum contracted with Signora Flageolet? or are you contriving how to make one mouth blow a trumpet, and sing at the same time? Mr. Bentley was always inventing new dishes by compounding heterogeneous ingredients, and called it cultivating the *Materia Edica*; for you geniuses hate the beaten road. He never would draw with common colours, or Indian ink, but being purely indolent too, always dipped his brush in the first thing he met, no matter whether the ashes, or the oil and vinegar, or all together, and ten to one but he tasted too, whether they would
not

not make a good sauce, for cleanliness was not one of his delicacies.

I have been at all the exhibitions, and do not find that we are got an inch nearer Raphael than we were. Sir Joshua has indeed produced the best portrait he ever painted, that of the Primate of Ireland, whom age has softened into a beauty: all the painters are begging to draw him, as they did from Reynolds's beggar-man. My brother has given me the view of Gray's tomb and churchyard, very prettily done, and inspired by Gray's own melancholy. I have hung it here in my favourite blue room, as a companion to Madame de Sévigné's Hôtel de Carnavalet, and call them my *Penseroso* and *Allegro*. Sir Edward was disappointed at your not revising his penta-chord,¹ for you inventors are jealous gods; but I assured him you had left town in a very few days after you were with him.

I am to dine on Monday at the Hôtel d'Harcourt. The town says the father's kingdom is soon to be invaded by the Spaniards: but the ministers, who certainly ought to know best, swear it is not true; so to be sure it is not.

I forgot to tell you that our friend Mrs. D.² is one of the warmest admirers of *Gray's Life*; but then she is equally charmed with Mrs. Chapone's writings, and thinks they will go a great way towards making the Bible fashionable. She lent them to me, but alas! they could not have so much effect on me, had I wanted it, for I could not read the Madam's works themselves.

Have

¹ An instrument invented by Sir Edward Walpole.—T.

² Doubtless Mrs. Delany, who was on very friendly terms with both Mason and Walpole.—T.

Have you had your summer, as we have? The fine ladies did not dare to ride on the causeway from Wednesday was se'nnight till last Friday, for fear of being tanned. We are now relapsed to fires. Adieu.

Yours most devotedly,

H. W.

P. S. I like the Hôtel d'Harcourt; it has *grand air* and a kind of Louis XIV old-fashionhood that pleases me. There is a large garden and new *parterre*, and we want some *treillage* if the Irish Exchequer would afford it. Lord N. says Oxford pouts at you as well as Cambridge. Lord Lyttelton does not admire. Mr. Palgrave, who was here this morning, says all the world admires, which is more than I demand. Pray, because you have written *the book*, do you never design to write anything else? Is the *English Garden* to be a fragment, and do you expect that anybody should finish it and write your life, as well as you have done both for Gray?

87. To Sir Horace Mann

[Aetat 58]

Paris

Oct. 10, 1775

I am still here, though on the wing. Your answer to mine from hence was sent back to me from England; as I have loitered here beyond my intention; in truth, from an indisposition of mind. I am not impatient to be in a frantic country, that is stabbing itself in every vein. The delirium still lasts; though, I believe, kept up by the quacks that caused it. Is it
credible

credible that five or six of the great *trading* towns have presented addresses against the Americans? I have no doubt but those addresses are procured by those boobies the country gentlemen, their members, and bought of the aldermen; but is it not amazing that the merchants and manufacturers do not duck such tools in a horse-pond? When the storm will recoil I do not know, but it will be terrible in all probability, though too late. Never shall we be again what we have been! Other powers, who sit still, and wisely suffer us to plunge over head and ears, will perhaps be alarmed at what they write from England, that we are to buy twenty thousand Russian assassins, at the price of Georgia: how deep must be our game, when we pursue it at the expense of establishing a new maritime power, and aggrandize that engrossing throne, which threatens half Europe, for the satisfaction of enslaving our own brethren! Horrible policy! If the Americans, as our papers say, are on the point of seizing Canada, I should think that France would not long remain neuter, when she may regain her fur trade with the Canadians, or obtain Canada from the Americans: but it is endless to calculate what we may lose. Our court has staked everything against despotism; and the nation, which must be a loser, whichever side prevails, takes part against the Americans, who fight for the nation as well as for themselves! What Egyptian darkness!

This country is far more happy. It is governed by benevolent and beneficent men, under a prince who has not yet betrayed a fault, and who will be as happy as his people if he always employs such men. Messieurs de Turgot and Male-
sherbes

sherbes are philosophers in the *frué* sense, that is, legislators; but, as their plans tend to serve the public, you may be sure they do not please interested individuals. The French, too, are light and fickle; and designing men, who have no weapon against good men but ridicule, already employ it to make a trifling nation laugh at its benefactors: and, if it is the fashion to laugh, the laws of fashion will be executed preferably to those of common sense.

There is a great place just vacant. The Maréchal de Muy, Secrétaire d'État pour la Guerre, died yesterday, having been cut the day before for the stone. The operation lasted thirty-five ages, that is, minutes!

Our Parliament meets on the 26th, and I suppose will act as infamously as it did last year. It cannot do worse,—scarce so ill, for now it cannot act inconsiderately. To joke in voting a civil war is the *comble* of infamy. I hope it will present flattering addresses on our disgraces, and heap taxes on those who admire the necessity of them. If the present generation alone would be punished by inviting the yoke, it were pity but it were already on their necks! Do not wonder at my indignation, nor at my indulging it. I can write freely hence—from England, where I may find the Inquisition, it would not be so prudent; but judge of our situation, when an Englishman, to speak his mind, must come to France! and hither I will come unless the times alter. I had rather live where a Maupeou¹ is banished, than where he is Chief Justice.²

I

¹ Chancellor of France.—WALPOLE.

² Alluding to Lord Mansfield.—WALPOLE.

I know nothing of their Royal Highnesses,¹ nor have heard of them since they were at Strasburg. I wrote twice to Venice; and if they think me in England, and have written thither, I should have received the letter, as I did yours, unless it is stopped. I can give you no advice, but to act prudently and decently, as you always do. If you receive orders, you must obey them. If you do not, you may show disposition; and yet I would not go too far. Even under orders, you may intimate concern; but I would express nothing in writing. My warmth may hurt itself, but never shall make me forget the interest of my friends. Adieu!

88. To the Rev. William Mason

[*Ætæt 58*]

Feb. 18, 1776

As my illness prevented my answering your delightful letter, I do not see why the leisure and solitude of convalescence should not be employed in replying to it; not poetically, for the current of the blood, frozen by age and chalkstoned by the gout, does not, though loosened from disease, flow over the smooth pebbles of Helicon. Mine, at best, were factitious rills that, like the artificial cascattle of Hagley, played for moments to entertain visitors, and were not the natural bounty of the soil. *You* are forced to restrain your torrent, and the dykes of prudence must be borne down before it overflows the country. Not so Mr. Anstey; because his muddy mill-pool had in one point of view the roar and lustre of a cascade when it fell over

a

¹ The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester.—WALPOLE.

a proper wheel, he thinks every pailful of its water, though soused down by a ploughman, has the same effect. His *Somersetshire Dialogue* is stupidity itself; you described it prophetically before you saw it.

Somebody or other has given us an epistle of another kind by the late Lord Melcombe;—not different from having more meaning, for Phoebus knows it has none at all, but so civil, so harmless, and so harmonious, that it is the ghost of one of Pope's tunes. How the puffy peer must have sweated when learning to sing of Pope, whom he could have strangled! The whole and sole drift of this cantata is to call Lord Bute 'Pollio,' and to beg to be his vicegerent upon earth. I should like to have heard Lord Bute asking Sir Harry Erskine who 'Pollio' was.

Mr. Whitehead has just published a pretty poem called *Variety*, in which there is humour and ingenuity, but not more poetry than is necessary for a Laureate; however, the plan is one, and is well wound up. I now pass to prose.

Lo, there is just appeared a truly classic work: a history, not majestic like Livy, nor compressed like Tacitus; not stamped with character like Clarendon; perhaps not so deep as Robertson's *Scotland*, but a thousand degrees above his *Charles*; not pointed like Voltaire, but as accurate as he is inexact; modest as he is *tranchant*, and sly as Montesquieu without being so *recherché*. The style is as smooth as a Flemish picture, and the muscles are concealed and only for natural uses, not exaggerated like Michael Angelo's to show the painter's skill in anatomy; nor composed of the limbs of clowns of different nations

nations, like Dr. Johnson's heterogeneous monsters. This book is Mr. Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. He is son of a foolish alderman, is a member of Parliament, and called a whimsical one because he votes variously as his opinion leads him; and his first production was in French, in which language he shines too. I know him a little, never suspected the extent of his talents, for he is perfectly modest, or I want penetration, which I know too, but I intend to know him a great deal more—there! there is food for your residence at York.

Do I know nothing superior to Mr. Gibbon? yes, but not what will entertain you at York; Mr. Gibbon's are good sense and polished art. I talk of great original genius. Lady Di Beauclerk has made seven large drawings in sut-water (her first attempt of the kind) for scenes of my *Mysterious Mother*. Oh, such drawings! Guido's grace, Albano's children, Poussin's expression, Salvator's boldness in landscape, and Andrea Sacchi's simplicity of composition might perhaps have equalled them had they wrought all together very fine. How an author's vanity can bestow bombast panegyric on his flatterers! Pray, Sir, when did I take myself for an original genius! Did not Shakespeare draw Hamlet from Olaus Ostrogothus, or some such name; did Le Soeur conceive the Chartreuse from any merit in the legend of St. Bruno? Seeing is believing, miracles are not ceased. I know how prejudiced I am apt to be; some time or other you will see whether I am so in this instance.

Now

Now for specific answers to your queries; many of which answers will not be specific, for I know little more than if I were at York. I know nothing of Garrick's sale of patent, but I know forty stories of his envy and jealousy that are too long to tell you by mouth or pen; of a Monsr. le Texier, another real prodigy, who acts whole plays, in which every character is perfect—and pray observe he has not read *my* play. In sum, Garrick says when he quits the stage, he will read plays too, but they will be better than Monsr. Texier's (who only reads those of other authors), for he shall write them himself. This I know he has said twice. *Ex pede Herculem*. The Duchess of Kingston only knows whether she will be tried. The Earl's zeal against her was as marvellous to me as to you; I know reasons why he should have done the reverse, and cannot reconcile contradictions. Why should not Sayers' affair sleep? what, who is awake? For your hundred other queries which you have not put to me, I shall not attempt to guess them, not from idleness, but from the probable incapacity of my being able to answer them. The womb of time is big; we shall see whether she is delivered of mice or mountains.

One word about myself, and I have done. I know you disliked my answer to Dr. Milles, and I know I was angry both at him and Mr. Hume. The latter had acted very treacherously by the story I have hinted at of the Swiss reviewer. Dr. Milles is a fool, who had been set on by Lord Hardwicke and that set, and at whom I have glanced. I have received many indirect little mischiefs from the Earl, who has of late courted

me

me as much, and I have been civil to him. But my answers shall some time or other appear, when I only shall be blamed and my antagonists will be dead, and not hurt by them. For Mr. Masters, he is a dirty simpleton, who began by flattering me, and because I neglected him, joined the pack. The arguments in the answers are very essential to the question, and I shall not give myself the trouble of extracting the ridicule on the answerers, as they deserved it.

My hands you see are well, but I could not have written so long an epistle with my feet, which are still in their flannels. As my spirits always revive in proportion as pain subsides, I shall take the liberty (Sir Residentiary) to trespass on your decorum by sending you an impromptu I wrote yesterday, to pretty Lady Craven, who sent me an eclogue of her own, every stanza of which ended with *January*, and which she desired me not to criticize, as some of the rhymes were incorrect, a licence I adopted in my second line:

Though lame and old, I do not burn
With fretfulness to scare ye;
And charms and wit like yours would turn
To May my January.
The God who can inspire and heal
Sure breathed your lines, sweet Fairy,
For as I read, I feel, I feel,
I'm not quite January.

Probably you would have liked better to have the eclogue, but I had not leave to send it.

89. To the Rev. William Cole

[Aetat 59]

Strawberry Hill

June 19, 1777

I thank you for your notices, dear Sir, and shall remember that on Prince William. I did see the *Monthly Review*, but hope one is not guilty of the death of every man who does not make one the dupe of a forgery. I believe Macpherson's success with *Osian* was more the ruin of Chatterton than I. Two years passed between my doubting the authenticity of Rowley's poems and his death. I never knew he had been in London till some time after he had undone and poisoned himself there. The poems he sent me were transcripts in his own hand, and even in that circumstance he told a lie; he said he had them from the very person at Bristol to whom he had given them. If any man was to tell you that monkish rhymes had been dug up at Herculaneum, which was destroyed several centuries before there was any such poetry, should you believe it? They have all the elegance of Waller and Prior, and more than Lord Surry—but I have no objection to anybody believing what he pleases. I think poor Chatterton was an astonishing genius—but I cannot think that Rowley foresaw metres that were invented long after he was dead, or that our language was more refined at Bristol in the reign of Henry V than it was at court under Henry VIII. One of the chaplains of the Bishop of Exeter has found a line of Rowley in *Hudibras*—the monk might foresee that too! The prematurity of Chatterton's

terton's genius is, however, full as wonderful, as that such a prodigy as Rowley should never have been heard of till the eighteenth century. The youth and industry of the former are miracles too, yet still more credible. There is not a symptom in the poems, but the old words, that savours of Rowley's age. Change the old words for modern, and the whole construction is of yesterday.

The other story you tell me is very credible and perfectly in character.

Yours ever,

H. W.

90. *To the Rev. William Mason*

[Ætæt 59]

Strawberry Hill

July 6, 1777

I don't know anybody so much in the wrong as you are for not coming to me this summer; you would see such a marvelous closet, so small, so perfect, so respectable; you would swear it came out of Havering in the Bower, and that Catherine de Valois used to retire into it to write to Owen Tudor. Lady Di's drawings—no offence to yours—are hung on Indian blue damask, the ceiling, door and surbase are gilt, and in the window are two brave *fleur de lis* and a lion of England, all royally crowned in painted glass, which, as Queen Catherine never did happen to write a *billet doux* in this closet, signify Beauclerc, the denomination of the tower. This cabinet is to
be

be sacred and not shown to the profane, as the drawings are not for the eyes of the vulgar. Yours shall have a place, which is the greatest honour I can do them. Miss Pope¹ the actress, who is at Mrs. Clive's, dined here yesterday, and literally shed tears, though she did not know the story. I think this is more to Lady Di's credit, than a tomtit pecking at painted fruit. The ceiling was fortunately finished some time ago. My plasterer is turned raving Methodist, and has sent me a frantic letter without sense or grammar, but desiring leave to open me a new plan of the Gospel. I am glad he had no *new light* about making stucco!

Those gentry the Methodists will grow troublesome, or worse; they were exceedingly unwilling to part with that impudent hypocrite, Dr. Dodd, and not less, to have forgery criminal. I own I felt very much for the poor wretch's protracted sufferings—but that was not the motive of their countenance; I cannot bear a militant arch-inquisitor, or an impostor in a tabernacle. Thank you for your reply to the former, etc.

I have no more *Gazettes Litteraires*, or *Politiques*. Linguet, the outcast of France, has published one here that makes some noise; part is satire on us, part panegyric, but in general very superficial. I have an anecdote apropos to him that is very curious. I will tell it you some day or other, but as it is a secret, I must not communicate it to the post office.

They^e have sent me from town a fourth volume of the
Archaeologia

¹ Jane Pope (1742-1818), the original 'Mrs. Candour' in *The School for Scandal*.—T.

Archæologia, or Old Women's Logic; the first paragraph is as complete nonsense as my plasterer's letter.

Don't let this horrid weather put you out of humour with your *Garden*, though I own it is pity we should have brought gardening to perfection, and have too bad a climate to enjoy it. It is strictly true this year, as I have often said, that ours is the most beautiful country in the world, when framed and glazed; but remember you can make the sun shine when you please, and as much as you please, and yet the verdure of your garden will be ever green. You are an excellent parish priest, catechize and make terriers, I believe, in perfection; but pray do not forget poor poetry, your natural vocation, as you have done so long; but you must be everything, an inventor of musical instruments, a painter, and a law suitor—

Besides a hundred freaks that died in thinking.

Well, I cannot help loving you with all your faults and all your perfections.

I am just now in great trouble, though a little relieved to-day by a better account. The Duke of Gloucester is extremely ill, and my poor niece in despair! They are coming if they can to England for a little time, as the heat of the south is too mighty for him. How dear has ambition cost her! Adieu.

As it is right to be impartial, which I am not naturally, I must tell you that at the end of the new *Archæologia* there is a very good essay on ancient castles, with very curious matter, by a Mr. King. I don't know who he is—but it rains again, and there is no bearing it.

As

91. *To Viscount Nuneham*

[Aetat 59]

Strawberry Hill

July 7, 1777

As I know your Lordship and Lady Nuneham are so good as to interest yourselves about the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, I cannot deny myself the satisfaction of telling you, that, though the express on Saturday was as bad as possible, yet another letter yesterday from the Duke's surgeon, dated three days later, brought a more favourable account. His Royal Highness had been taken out of bed and put into a post-chaise, as it was thought nothing but change of air and motion could save him. He bore the travelling for two days very well, and got eight hours of sleep. The third day he was less well from fatigue, but the surgeon did not think him otherwise worse. I hope in God this alarm will pass off like the former!—but nothing, except her own words, could paint the agonies of the Duchess. She is alarmed too for the little Prince. They are coming to England, but not to stay, as Italian winters agree with the Duke, though the summers are so prejudicial.

Now I have taken this liberty, my dear Lord, I must take a little more; you know my old admiration and envy are your garden. I do not grudge Pomona or Sir James Cockburn their hothouses, nor intend to ruin myself by raising sugar and water in tanner's bark and peach skins. The Flora Nunehamica is the height of my ambition, and if your Linnaeus should
have

have any disciple that would condescend to look after my little flower-garden, it would be the delight of my eyes and nose, provided the cataracts of heaven are ever shut again! Not one proviso do I make, but that the pupil be not a Scot. We had peace and warm weather before the inundation of that northern people, and therefore I beg to have no Attila for my gardener.

Apropos, don't your Lordship think that another set of legislators, the Maccaronis and Maccaronesses, are very wise? People abuse them for turning days, nights, hours, and seasons topsy-turvy; but surely it was upon mature reflection. We had a set of customs and ideas borrowed from the continent that by no means suited our climate. Reformers bring back things to their natural course. Notwithstanding what I said in spite in the paragraph above, we are in truth but Greenlanders and ought to conform to our climate. We should lay in store of provisions and candles and masquerades and coloured lamps for ten months in the year, and shut out our twilight and enjoy ourselves. In September and October we may venture out of our ark and make our hay and gather in our corn, and go to horse-races, and kill pheasants and partridges for stock for our winter's supper. I sailed in a skiff and pair this morning to Lady Cecilia Johnston, and found her, like a good housewife, sitting over her fire, with her cats and dogs and birds and children. She brought out a dram to warm me and my servants, and we were very merry and comfortable. As Lady Nuneham has neither so many two-footed or four-footed cares upon her hands, I hope her hands have been better employed.

I wish I could peep over her shoulder one of these wet mornings!

Adieu, my dear Lord; forgive all my babble. Yesterday's letter raised my spirits, and I love to impart my satisfaction to those I love, which, with all due respect, I must take leave to say I feel for you, and am most sincerely, etc.

[Aetat 60]

92. *To the Countess of Upper Ossory*

Thursday night, Dec. 11, 1777

I do not write, Madam, to tell you politics; you will hear them better from Lord Ossory: nor indeed have I words to paint the abject impudent poltroonery of the ministers, or the blockish stupidity of the Parliament.

Lord North yesterday declared he should during the recess prepare to lay before the Parliament proposals of peace to be offered to the Americans! *I trust we have force enough to bring forward an accommodation.* They were his very words. Was ever proud insolent nation sunk so low! Burke and Charles Fox told him the administration thought of nothing but keeping their places; and so they will, and the members their pensions, and the nation its infamy. Were I Franklin, I would order the Cabinet Council to come to me at Paris with ropes about their necks, and then kick them back to St. James's.

Well, Madam, as I told Lord Ossory t'other day, I am satisfied—Old England is safe, that is, America, whither the
true

true English retired under Charles the First:—this is Nova Scotia, and I care not what becomes of it.

I have just been at *Percy*.¹ The four first acts are much better than I expected, and very animated. There are good situations, and several pretty passages, but not much nature. There is a fine speech of the heroine to her father, and a strange sermon against Crusades, that ends with a description of the Saviour, who died for our sins. The last act is very ill-conducted, unnatural, and obscure. Earl Douglas is a savage ruffian. Earl Percy is converted by the virtue of his mistress, and she is *love and virtue* in the supreme degree. There is a prologue and epilogue about fine ladies and fine gentlemen, and feathers and buckles, and I don't doubt every word of both Mr. Garrick's, for they are commonplace, and written for the upper gallery. It was very moderately performed, but one passage against the *odious Scot* Douglas was loudly applauded, and showed that the mob have no pensions.

Our brave administration have turned out Lord Jersey and Mr. Hopkins, which will certainly convince all America and all Europe, that they are not afraid; though I saw one of their tools to-day who assured me they are,—nay, he said (and *he* is somebody) that if the Congress insists on the ministry being changed it must be. I do not believe the Congress will do them so much honour; but I answered, 'Sir, if the Congress should make that condition, it will not be from caring about it, but to make the pacification impossible. I do not believe they care much more for the opposition than for the administration; but they

¹ A tragedy by Hannah More.

they must know that the opposition could not, would not, grant terms, that this administration should refuse.'

Adieu, Madam! I am at last not sorry you have no son, and your daughters, I hope, will be married to Americans, and not in this dirty, despicable island!

93. *To Sir Horace Mann*

[Aetat 60]

Arlington Street

Feb. 18, 1778

I do not know how to word the following letter; how to gain credit with you! How shall I intimate to you, that you must lower your topsails, waive your imperial dignity, and strike to the colours of the thirteen United Provinces of America? Do not tremble, and imagine that Washington has defeated General Howe, and driven him out of Philadelphia; or that Gates has taken another army; or that Portsmouth is invested by an American fleet. No: no sacrifice has been made on the altar of peace. Stop again: peace is not made, it is only implored,—and I fear, only on this side of the Atlantic. In short, yesterday, *February* 17th, a most memorable era, Lord North opened his conciliatory plan,—no partial, no collusive one. In as few words as I can use, it solicits peace with the States of America: it haggles on no terms; it acknowledges the Congress, or anybody that pleases to treat; it confesses errors, misinformation, ill-success, and impossibility of conquest; it disclaims taxation, desires commerce, hopes for assistance, allows the independence of America, not verbally, yet virtually, and suspends hostilities till June 1779. It does

a little more: not *verbally*, but *virtually*, it confesses that the opposition have been in the right from the beginning to the end.

The warmest American cannot deny but these gracious condescensions are ample enough to content that whole continent; and yet, my friend, such accommodating facility had one defect,—it came too late. The treaty between the high and mighty States and France is signed; and instead of peace, we must expect war with the high allies. The French army is come to the coast, and their officers here are recalled.

The House of Commons embraced the plan, and voted it *nemine contradicente*. It is to pass both Houses with a rapidity that will do everything but overtake time past. All the world is in astonishment. As my letter will not set out till the day after to-morrow, I shall have time to tell you better what is thought of this amazing step.

Feb. 20.

In sooth I cannot tell you what is thought. Nobody knows what to think. To leap at once from an obstinacy of four years to a total concession of everything; to stoop so low, without hopes of being forgiven—who can understand such a transformation? I must leave you in all your wonderment; for the cloud is not dispersed. When it shall be, I doubt it will discover no serene prospect! All that remains certain is, that America is not only lost but given up. We must no longer give ourselves Continental airs! I fear even our trident will find it has lost a considerable prong.

I have lived long, but never saw such a day as last Tuesday!

From

From the first I augured ill of this American war; yet do not suppose that I boast of my penetration. Far was I from expecting such a conclusion! Conclusion!—*y sommes-nous?* Acts of Parliament have made a war, but cannot repeal one. They have provoked—not terrified; and Washington and Gates have respected the Speaker's mace no more than Oliver Cromwell did.

You shall hear as events arise. I disclaim all sagacity, and pretend to no foresight. It is not an Englishman's talent. Even the second sight of the Scots has proved a little purblind.

You have heard that Voltaire is actually at Paris? Perhaps soon you will learn French news earlier than I can.

What scenes my letters to you have touched on for eight-and-thirty years! I arrived here at the eve of the termination of my father's happy reign. The Rebellion, as he foresaw, followed; and much disgrace. Another war ensued, with new disgraces. And then broke forth Lord Chatham's sun; and all was glory and extensive empire. Nor tranquillity nor triumph are our lot now! The womb of time is not with child of a mouse,—but adieu! I shall probably write again before you have digested half the meditations this letter will have conjured up.

94. *To the Countess of Upper Ossory*

[Aetat 61]

Bedfordshire

April 8, 1779

I did not answer your Ladyship's letter, as I generally do, the moment I received it, because I had nothing to tell you
about

about the remnant of myself, which is the worst subject in the world. I have been six days at Strawberry Hill, and I think the soft south-west did me good; but I have a constant feverish heat that seems to be undermining my ruins; however, its progress is very slow; and so if you please we will say no more of it; but your goodness in inquiring is written on my heart's last tablet. Mr. Mason was with me for two days: he is printing the third book of his *Garden*.

Lord Harrington is gathered to his fathers, or rather, is taken from his *mothers*. Lord Beauchamp's son is well again. Lord Harrington has left my Lady 2,500*l.* besides her jointure of 1,500*l.* a year; to Lady Anna Maria 6,000*l.*; 5,000*l.* to Mr. Stanhope, and an estate of 150*l.* a year; but there are so many debts that the legacies are more magnificent than generous. The charming house at St. James's is to be sold; but it is supposed the present Earl will purchase it.

This is all I have heard, Madam, since I came to town yesterday, which is perfectly empty; the grass grows in the streets, though nowhere else, for the climate is turned as Asiatic as the government; and it is to be hoped that in time there will be elephants and tigers of our own growth in the Sultan's gardens, to the great satisfaction of Sir William Chambers. I was pleased yesterday to see that, though everything old-fashioned is going out of date, we have still resources. If our trade decays we have new handicrafts: at Turnham Green I read on a large board—*manufacture of temples*. I suppose the Archbishop of York will set up looms in his diocese
for

for Popish chapels, and Manchester weave dungeons for the Inquisition. The Pope's bull against the Dissenters' Bill is actually issued from the Clarendon printing-house. I was interrupted by the strangest story I ever heard, and which I cannot yet believe, though it is certainly true. Last night as Miss Wray¹ was getting into her coach in Covent Garden from the play, a clergyman shot her through the head, and then himself. She is dead; but he is alive to be hanged—in the room of Sir Hugh Palliser. Now, Madam, can one believe such a tale? How could poor Miss Wray have offended a divine? She was no enemy to the church militant or naval, to the Church of England, or the church of Paphos. I do not doubt but it will be found that the assassin was a Dissenter, and instigated by the Americans to give such a blow to the state. My servants have heard that the murderer was the victim's husband: methinks his jealousy was very long-suffering! *Tantaene animis caelestibus iræ!* and that he should not have compounded for a deanery! What trials Lord Sandwich goes through! he had better have one for all.

Friday, 9th

I gave David this letter yesterday, and had forgotten to seal it, which he did not perceive till I was gone out for the evening. Instead of sealing it he kept it for me till this morning after I had written my second. I send both to show I have been punctual, though all the novelty is evaporated, and my intelligence is not worth a farthing more than the newspaper.

Ladies

¹ Miss Martha Ray, mistress of Lord Sandwich.

April 9, 1779

Ladies, said a certain philosopher, always tell their minds in the postscript. As that is the habitation of truth, I send you, Madam, a little more truth than there was in my narrative of yesterday, which was warm from the first breath of rumour: yet though this is only a postscript I will not answer for its perfect veracity. It is the most authentic account I have yet been able to collect of so strange a story, of which no doubt you are curious to know more.

The assassin's name is Hackman; he is brother to a reputable tradesman in Cheapside, and is of a very pleasing figure himself, and most engaging behaviour. About five years ago he was an officer in the 66th Regiment, and being quartered at Huntingdon, pleased so much as to be invited to the oratorios at Hinchinbrook, and was much caressed there. Struck with Miss Ray's charms he proposed marriage, but she told him she did not choose to carry a knapsack. He went to Ireland, and there changed the colour of his cloth, and at his return, I think not long ago, renewed his suit, hoping a cassock would be more tempting than a gorget; but in vain. Miss Wray, it seems, has been out of order, and abroad but twice all the winter. She went to the play on Wednesday night for the second time with Galli the singer. During the play the desperate lover was at the Bedford Coffee House, and behaved with great calmness, and drank a glass of capillaire. Towards the conclusion, he sallied into the piazza, waiting till he saw his victim handed by Mr. Macnamara. He came behind her,
pulled

pulled her by the gown, and on her turning round, clapped the pistol to her forehead, and shot her through the head. With another pistol he then attempted to shoot himself, but the ball only grazing his brow, he tried to dash out his own brains with the pistol, and is more wounded by those blows than by the ball.

Lord Sandwich was at home expecting her to supper at half an hour after ten. On her not returning an hour later, he said something must have happened: however, being tired, he went to bed at half an hour after eleven, and was scarce in bed before one of his servants came in and said Miss Ray was shot. He stared, and could not comprehend what the fellow meant; nay, lay still, which is full as odd a part of the story as any. At twelve came a letter from the surgeon to confirm the account; and then he was extremely afflicted.

Now, upon the whole, Madam, is not the story full as strange as ever it was? Miss Ray has six children, the eldest son is fifteen, and she was at least three times as much. To bear a hopeless passion for five years, and then murder one's mistress—I don't understand it! If the story clears up at all, your Ladyship shall have a sequel. These circumstances I received from Lord Hertford, who heard them at court yesterday from the Lords of the Admiralty. I forgot that the Galli swooned away on the spot.

I do not love tragic events *en pure perte*. If they do happen, I would have them historic. This is only of kin to history, and tends to nothing. It is very impertinent in one Hackman, to rival Herod, and shoot Mariamne—and *that* Mariamne a kept

kept mistress! and yet it just sets curiosity agog, because she belongs to Lord Sandwich, at a critical moment—and yet he might as well have killed any other inhabitant of Covent Garden.

95. *To the Rev. William Mason*

[Ætæt 62]

Berkeley Square

Nov. 29, 1779

I desired Mr. Stonhewer on Saturday to write to you, and to tell you why I could not. From him or from the newspapers, who know everything as well and as soon as anybody, you will have learnt that the edifice of the majority does not, like the chief temple of the Philistines, rest on two slight pillars, which being removed, the whole fabric fell to pieces, but when pilasters take themselves for buttresses, no wonder they are mistaken. Such has been the fate of the Lords Gower and Weymouth, and I wish everybody saw them in as contemptible a light as I do. The last has attempted to avoid no degree of shame, for he is actually run away to Longleat. However, they do not give up the game, but have a matadore still to play *a black ace*.

So you think that we are still living on Thursday's debate and division! You are extremely mistaken, good Sir; we have fresh events every morning, not revolutions indeed, nor sea-fights, nor rebellions—all in good time. But we can furnish you every day with occurrences so strange and unexpected, that you folks in the country would live on a single one for
three

three months. Come, what do you like? what do you choose? Is not a sudden death very comfortable in a long winter's evening over a sea-coal fire? or is a duel more to your taste? What young profligate would you wish hurried out of the world in an instant—I mean only as a beautiful flower that would close a sermon delicately, that you are composing on the debaucheries and gaming of the age? Would not there be still more dignity in it, if he were a young peer? or shall he be a fashionable orator? or a grave judge—or shall he be all three? You are a little difficult, Mr. Mason, and yet in these times much may be done to serve a friend. Or what think you of a single combat seasoned with a little spice of premeditated assassination *à la* Sam Martin,¹ which pray observe does not signify Saint Martin.

Well, then, I will try to please you if I can. Know then that on Saturday night one of his Majesty's Chief Justices in Eyre, after having vented a warm philippic on Thursday *against* the administration, and after having retired to his house at Epsom on Friday, attended only by four virgins, whom he had picked up in the Strand, and after having supped plentifully on the said Saturday on fish and venison, finding himself indisposed, went to bed, rung his bell in ten minutes, and in one minute after the arrival of his servant, expired! But what signifies sudden death without forewarning? He had said on Thursday that he should die in three days, had dreamt so and felt it would be so: on Saturday he said, 'If I outlive
to-day

¹ Samuel Martin practiced at a target before challenging Wilkes.—T.

to-day I shall go on;’—but enough of him. My next event is worth ten of this.

As Lord Lyttelton had spoken *against* the ministers, Mr. Adam, nephew of the architects, spoke *for* them. It is supposed that whenever Scotland was dissatisfied with, pooh! I mean, not satisfied by, Lord North, Adam was delegated to run at him; and now and then might have a plenary indulgence from the Pope for talking the language of opposition, in order to worm out secrets—poor souls! as if they had any.

Well, on Thursday he made a most absurd speech in favour of the court, which Charles Fox tore piecemeal with infinite humour and argument, which tortured the patient so much that next day he asked an explanation. Fox assured him he had meant nothing personal, but had a right to dislocate his arguments, and he was satisfied; but on Sunday he sent a Scotch major to Fox to complain of the state of the debate in the newspapers, and to desire Mr. Fox would contradict and declare his good opinion of him. Fox returned for answer, that he was not responsible for accounts in newspapers; that it was harder still if on their misrepresentation he must give a good character of any man they abused: he again declared he had intended no offence, and that Mr. Adam was welcome to show that declaration to anybody. After consultation, Adam returned that Mr. Fox must print that recantation. ‘Hold!’ said Fox, ‘not so far neither.’—Oh, I forgot the principal circumstance of all: Adam added that his *friends* would not be satisfied under less than publication. At eight this morning they went into Hyde Park, Fox with Fitzpatrick, Adam with
his

his Major Humberston for seconds. 'Adam fired, and the ball wounded Charles Fox's side, though very slightly: he then fired, missed, and said, 'Now, Mr. Adam, are you satisfied?'

Near as you are to the Tweed you will not guess the reply. 'No,' said Adam; 'you must still print your letter.' Nothing could be more unjust, more unfair. They had fought because Fox would *not* consent to that pretension. Fox with the same firmness and temper with which he had conducted himself through the whole affair peremptorily refused, and the bloodhound again fired, but missed, and then Fox fired into the air and it ended.

An odd circumstance larded this history. Humberston was waiting for him at Fox's house, and so was Sheridan: when Charles was come home and had dispatched the bravo, Sheridan said, 'Pray who is that ill-looking fellow? he looks like the carrier of a challenge.'

Well, I am sure I have made amends for having been punished by the gout, and here too have I been writing in bed till eleven at night, but thank you I am better and was in the other room from twelve till six to-day, when my pains returned; yet finding them easier at nine, I was eager to be the first to tell you two such strange events. Half the town have been reading the latter correspondence in Charles Fox's room the whole morning, and I received it piping hot, except that I have abridged it a little, from a very accurate reporter. Adieu, or the bellman will be gone.¹

You

¹ Letters for late post were formerly collected by a bellman, who was a post-office official.—T.

96. *To the Rev. William Cole*

[Ætæt 62]

Strawberry Hill

March 13, 1780

You compliment me, my good friend, on a sagacity that is surely very common. How frequently do we see portraits that have caught the features and missed the countenance or character! which is far more difficult to hit. Nor is it infrequent to hear that remark made.

I have confessed to you that I am fond of local histories. It is the general execution of them that I condemn, and that I call *the worst kind of reading*. I cannot comprehend but they might be performed with taste. I did mention this winter the new edition of Atkyns's *Gloucestershire*, as having additional descriptions of situations that I thought had merit. I have just got another, *A View of Northumberland*, in two volumes quarto, with cuts; but I do not devour it fast, for the author's predilection is to Roman antiquities, which, such as are found in this island, are very indifferent, and inspire me with little curiosity. A barbarous country, so remote from the seat of empire, and occupied by a few legions, that very rarely decided any great events, is not very interesting, though one's own country—nor do I care a straw for a stone that preserves the name of a standard-bearer of a cohort, or of a colonel's daughter. Then I have no patience to read the tiresome disputes of antiquaries to settle forgotten names of vanished towns, and to prove that such a village was called
something

something else in Antoninus's *Itinerary*. I do not say that the Gothic antiquities that I like are of more importance; but at least they exist. The site of a Roman camp, of which nothing remains but a bank, gives me not the smallest pleasure. One knows they had square camps—has one a clearer idea from the spot, which is barely distinguishable? How often does it happen that the lumps of earth are so imperfect, that it is never clear whether they are Roman, Druidic, Danish, or Saxon fragments?—the moment it is uncertain, it is plain they furnish no specific idea of art or history; and then I neither desire to see or read of them.

I have been diverted, too, to another work, in which I am personally a little concerned. Yesterday was published an octavo, pretending to contain the correspondence of Hackman and Miss Wray, that he murdered.¹ I doubt whether the letters are genuine; and yet, if fictitious, they are executed well, and enter into his character—hers appears less natural; and yet the editors were certainly more likely to be in possession of hers, than of his. It is not probable that Lord Sandwich should have sent what he found in her apartment to the press. No account is pretended to be given of how they come to light.

You will wonder how I should be concerned in this correspondence, who never saw either of the lovers in my days. In fact, my being dragged in is a reason for my doubting the authenticity; nor can I believe that the long letter, in which

I

¹ *Love and Madness, a Story too true, in a Series of Letters between Parties whose names could perhaps be mentioned were they less known or less lamented*, by Herbert Croft (1751-1816) who succeeded in 1797 as fifth Baronet. The letters are fictitious.—T.

I am frequently mentioned, could be written by the wretched lunatic. It pretends that Miss Wray desired him to give her a particular account of Chatterton. He does give a most ample one—but is there a glimpse of probability that a being so frantic should have gone to Bristol, and sifted Chatterton's sister, and others, with as much cool curiosity as Mr. Lort could do? and at such a moment! Besides, he murdered Miss Wray, I think, in March; my printed defence was not at all dispersed before the preceding January or February, nor do I conceive that Hackman could ever see it. There are notes, indeed, by the editor, who has certainly seen it—but I rather imagine that the editor, whoever he is, composed the whole volume. I am acquitted of being accessory to the lad's death, which is gracious; but much blamed for speaking of his bad character, and for being too hard on his forgeries, though I took so much pains to specify the innocence of them; and for his character, I only quoted the words of his own editor and panegyrist. I did not repeat what Dr. Goldsmith told me at the Royal Academy, where I first heard of his death, that he went by the appellation of the *young villain*—but it is not new to me, as you know, to be blamed by two opposite parties. The editor has in one place confounded me and my uncle, who he says, as is true, checked Lord Chatham for being too forward a young man in 1740. In that year I was not even come into Parliament; and must have been absurd indeed if I had taunted Lord Chatham with youth, who was at least six or seven years younger than he was—and how could he reply by reproaching me with old age, who was then not
twenty-three

twenty-three? I shall make no answer to these absurdities, nor to any part of the work. Blunder, I see, people will, and talk of what they do not understand; and what care I? There is another trifling mistake of still less consequence. The editor supposes that it was Macpherson who communicated Ossian to me. It was Sir David Dalrymple who sent me the first specimens. Macpherson did once come to me—but my credulity was then a little shaken.

Lady Ailesbury has promised me guinea-eggs for you, but they have not yet begun to lay.

I am well acquainted with Lady Craven's little tale¹ dedicated to me. It is careless and incorrect, but there are very pretty things in it.

I will stop, for fear I have written to you too much lately. One you did not mention; I think it was of the 28th of last month.

Yours entirely,

H. WALPOLE.

97. *To the Rev. William Mason*

[Aetat 62]

[May, 1780]

The newspapers have told you all that I could have said, and that nothing has happened worth repeating or detailing. The spirit you raised is evaporated or split into a thousand branches by mismanagement. The opposition is as much
divided

¹ *Modern Anecdote of the Ancient Family of the Kinkewankotsdarprakengotchderns; A Tale for Christmas, 1779.*—T.

divided amongst themselves, as they and the ministers; and those squabbles more than any other cause have re-established the predominance of the court. The Bishop of St. Asaph showed me a sensible letter from his son, the Dean, who says it was with much difficulty that he prevailed to have the committee of their county adjourned, and that it would have been infallibly dissolved if he had pressed the Association. In short, I can only lament that the sole chance we have had in so many years of recovering the vigour of this country has been thrown away. The ministers, though detesting each other more than the factions in the opposition, have had the sense not to quarrel, and they reap the benefit of *unanimity*, which we professed and could not observe for a moment.

Did you see *Royal Reflections*? They are excellent, and I am persuaded were written by Fitzpatrick. The courtiers are restringing their lyres too. There is an ode, said to be written by Soame Jenyns, and I believe so from one or two strokes of humour, though in general a paltry performance. The preface is an attack on Gray and you, who I am sure are our only Pindars. The conclusion ironically implores liberty:—

To shield us safe, beneath her guardian wings,
From Law, Religion, ministers, and kings.

Soame Jenyns does think, I do not doubt, that ministers ought to be our law, and kings our religion. When you are in your *own-issime* vein, I trust you will remember him.

You know, I suppose, that the Royal Academy at Somerset House is opened. It is quite a Roman palace, and finished in
perfect

perfect taste as well as boundless expense. It would have been a glorious apparition at the conclusion of the great war; now it is an insult on our poverty and degradation. There is a sign-post by West of his Majesty holding the memorial of his late campaign, lest we should forget that he was at Coxheath when the French fleet was in Plymouth Sound. By what lethargy of loyalty it happened I do not know, but *there* is also a picture of Mrs. Wright modelling the head of Charles the First, and their Majesties contemplating it. Gainsborough has five landscapes there, of which one especially is worthy of any collection, and of any painter that ever existed.

There is come out a Life of Garrick, in two volumes, by Davies the bookseller, formerly a player. It is written naturally, simply, without pretensions, nay, and without partiality (though under the auspices of Dr. Johnson), unless, as it seems, the prompter reserved all the flattery to himself, and according to an epigram on the late Queen and the Hermitage,—

whispered, Let the incense all be mine.

In consequence, the author calls the pedant the greatest man of the age, and compares his trumpery tragedy of *Irene* to *Cato*. However, the work is entertaining, and deserves immortality for preserving that *sublime* saying of Quin (which, by the way, he profanes by calling it a *bon mot*), who disputing on the execution of Charles I, and being asked by his antagonist by what law he was put to death, replied, ‘By all the laws he had left them.’ I wish you would translate it
into

into Greek, and write it in your 'Longinus'; it has ten times more grandeur, force, and meaning than anything he cites.

Apropos to the theatre, I have read *The School for Scandal*: it is rapid and lively, but is far from containing the wit I expected from seeing it acted.

May I leap from the stage to the bench? Sir Thomas Rumbold, one of our Indian mushrooms, asked his father-in-law, the Bishop of Carlisle, to answer for a child that he had left in a parsley-bed of diamonds at Bengal. The good man consented; a man-child was born. The other godfather was the Nabob of Arcot—and the new Christian's name is—Mahomet! What pity that Dr. Law was the godfather and not [the] Bishop of Hagedorn or your Metropolitan!

Mr. Jones, the orientalist, is candidate for Oxford. On Tuesday was se'nnight Mrs. Vesey¹ presented him to me. The next day he sent me an absurd and pedantic letter, desiring I would make interest for him. I answered it directly, and told him I had no more connection with Oxford than with the Antipodes, nor desired to have. I doubt I went a little further, and laughed at Dr. Blackstone, whom he quoted as an advocate for the rights of learning, and at some other passages in his letter. However, before I sent it, I inquired a little more about Mr. Jones, and on finding it was a circular letter sent to several, I did not think it necessary to answer it at all; and now I am glad I did not, for the man it seems is a staunch Whig, but very wrong-headed. He was tutor to Lord Althorp, and quarreled with Lord Spencer, who he insisted

¹ 'The Sylph,' whose Blue Stocking parties rivaled Mrs. Montagu's.

sisted should not interfere at all in the education of his own son.

There are just appeared three new *Epistles on History*, addressed to Mr. Gibbon by Mr. Hayley.¹ They are good poems, I believe, weight and measure, but except some handsome new similes, have little poetry and less spirit. In short, they are written by Judgement, who has set up for herself, forgetting that her business is to correct verses, and not to write them. Mr. Gibbon, I doubt, will not be quite pleased; for as the *Epistles* have certainly cost the author some pains, they were probably commenced before the historian's conversion to the court, and are a little too fond of liberty to charm the ear of a convert, which too the author wants to make him in another sense, and that will not please, unless he has swallowed his Majesty's professions as well as his pay.

In another new publication, called *Antiquities and Scenery in the North of Scotland*, I have found two remarkable passages, which intimate doubts of the antiquity of *Ossian*, though the author is a minister in Banff. The first, in p. 77, says, 'if only like a morning dream the visions of Ossian came in later days'. The other humbly begs to know, p. 81, how Fingal became possessed of burnished armour, when the times knew not the use of steel and iron.

My *quondam* friend, George Montagu, has left your friend Frederic five hundred pounds a year. I am very glad of it.

I have heard what I should not repeat, as I do not know
that

¹ William Hayley (1745-1820), the poet, the friend and biographer of Cowper and Romney.

that it is true, but today I see it in the papers: in short, they say that the unfortunate Knight of the Polar Star¹ has disappeared. The reason given is that a demand of 300,000*l.*, more for finishing the sumptuous edifice where Somerset House stood, having been made to the House of Commons, Mr. Brett, a member, begged to see an account of what had been already expended, and the next day all the telescopes in town could not descry the Swedish planet. I am sorry, considering that the constellation of the Adelphi was not *rayée* from the celestial globe after their bubble lottery. I suppose Ossian will keep his ground, and would, if Macpherson should please to maintain that he lived before Tubal,

Berkeley Square

May 19, 1780

Most part of this letter has been written many days: I waited for a proper conveyance. Now it comes to you in what Wedgewood calls a 'Druid's Mug,' you must drink out of it 'Ruin seize thee, ruthless King.'² Mr. Stonhewer gave men the direction, but I find it will not set out before Tuesday. However, I shall not be able to add to this volume, as I go to Strawberry to-morrow, and must leave it for the waggon. Sir Charles Hardy is dead suddenly. Lord Bathurst, I suppose, will have the command of the Fleet, as the senior *old Woman on the Staff*.

I shall settle at Strawberry on Tuesday se'nnight so if you have

¹ Sir William Chambers, the architect, created a Knight of the order by the King of Sweden in 1771.—T.

² The Opening line of Gray's ode, *The Bard*.

have a mind to hear from me ~~you~~ must write; for I shall know no more there than you in Yorkshire; and I cannot talk if nobody answers me. Somebody knocks, which is a very good conclusion when one has no more to say. Oh, it is Mr. Palgrave: well, he tells me that Sir William Chambers is not gone away, so I retract all, but that the Adams ought to be gone. Adieu!

98. *To the Countess of Upper Ossory*

[Aetat 62]

Berkeley Square

June 3, 1780

I know that a governor or a gazetteer ought not to desert their posts, if a town is besieged, or a town is full of news; and therefore, Madam, I resume my office. I smile to-day—but I trembled last night; for an hour or more I never felt more anxiety. I knew the bravest of my friends were barricaded into the House of Commons, and every avenue to it impossible. Till I heard the Horse and Foot Guards were gone to their rescue, I expected nothing but some dire misfortune; and the first thing I heard this morning was that part of the town had had a fortunate escape from being burnt after ten last night. You must not expect order, Madam; I must recollect circumstances as they occur; and the best idea I can give your Ladyship of the tumult will be to relate it as I heard it.

I had come to town in the morning on a private occasion, and found it so much as I left it, that though I saw a few blue
cockades

cockades here and there, I only took them for new recruits. Nobody came in; between seven and eight I saw a hack and another coach arrive at Lord Shelburne's, and thence concluded that Lord George Gordon's trumpet had brayed to no purpose. At eight I went to Gloucester House; the Duchess told me there had been a riot, and that Lord Mansfield's glasses had been broken, and a bishop's, but that most of the populace were dispersed. About nine his Royal Highness and Colonel Heywood arrived; and then we heard a much more alarming account. The concourse had been incredible, and had by no means obeyed the injunctions of their apostle, or rather had interpreted the spirit instead of the letter. The Duke had reached the House with the utmost difficulty, and found it sunk from the temple of dignity to an asylum of lamentable objects. There were the Lords Hillsborough, Stormont, Townshend, without their bags, and with their hair dishevelled about their ears, and Lord Willoughby without his periwig, and Lord Mansfield, whose glasses had been broken, quivering on the woolsack like an aspen. Lord Ashburnham had been torn out of his chariot, the Bishop of Lincoln ill-treated, the Duke of Northumberland had lost his watch in the holy hurly-burly, and Mr. Mackenzie his snuff-box and spectacles. Alarm came that the mob had thrown down Lord Boston, and were trampling him to death; which they almost did. They had diswigged Lord Bathurst on his answering them stoutly, and told him he was the Pope, and an old woman; thus splitting Pope Joan into two. Lord Hillsborough, on being taxed with negligence, affirmed that the Cabinet had the day before em-
powered

powered Lord North to take precautions; but two Justices that were called denied having received any orders. Colonel Heywood, a very stout man, and luckily a very cool one, told me he had thrice been collared as he went by the Duke's order to inquire what was doing in the other House; but though he was not suffered to pass he reasoned the mob into releasing him,—yet, he said, he never saw so serious an appearance and such determined countenances.

About eight the Lords adjourned, and were suffered to go home; though the rioters declared that if the other House did not repeal the bill, there would at night be terrible mischief. Mr. Burke's name had been given out as the object of resentment. General Conway I knew would be intrepid and not give way; nor did he, but inspired the other House with his own resolution. Lord George Gordon was running backwards and forwards, from the windows of the Speaker's Chamber denouncing all that spoke against him to the mob in the lobby. Mr. Conway tasked him severely both in the House and aside, and Colonel Murray¹ told him he was a disgrace to his family. Still the members were besieged and locked up for four hours, nor could divide, as the lobby was crammed. Mr. Conway and Lord Frederick Cavendish, with whom I supped afterwards, told me there was a moment when they thought they must have opened the doors and fought their way out swords in hand. Lord North was very firm, and at last they got the Guards and cleared the pass.

Blue

¹ Lieutenant-Colonel Hon. James Murray, second son of Lord George Murray (The Pretender's General), and uncle of the Duke of Athol; M. P. for Perthshire; d. 1794.—T.

Blue banners had been waved from tops of houses at Whitehall as signals to the people, while the coaches passed, whom they should applaud or abuse. Sir George Savile's and Charles Turner's coaches were demolished. Ellis, whom they took for a Popish gentleman, they carried prisoner to the Guildhall in Westminster, and he escaped by a ladder out of a window. Lord Mahon harangued the people from the balcony of a coffee-house and begged them to retire; but at past ten a new scene opened. The mob forced the Sardinian minister's¹ chapel in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and gutted it. He saved nothing but two chalices; lost the silver lamps, &c., and the benches being tossed into the street, were food for a bonfire, with the blazing brands of which they set fire to the inside of the chapel, nor, till the Guards arrived, would suffer the engines to play. My cousin, T. Walpole, fetched poor Madam Cordon, who was ill, and guarded her in his house till three in the morning, when all was quiet.

Old Haslang's² chapel has undergone the same fate, all except the ordeal. They found stores of mass-books and run tea.

This is a slight and hasty sketch, Madam. On Tuesday the House of Commons is to consider the Popish laws. I forgot to tell you that the bishops not daring to appear, the Winchester bill, which had passed the Commons, was thrown out.

No saint was ever more diabolic than Lord George Gordon. Eleven wretches are in prison for the outrage at Cordon's and
will

¹ The Marquis de Cordon.

² The Bavarian Envoy.

will be hanged instead of their arch-incendiary. One person seized is a Russian officer, who had the impudence to claim acquaintance with the Sardinian minister, and desired to be released. Cordon replied, 'Oui, Monsieur, je vous connoissois, mais je ne vous connois plus.' I do not know whether he is an associate of Thalestris, who seems to have snuffed a revolution in the wind.

I hear there are hopes of some temperament in Ireland. Somebody, I forget who, has observed that the English government pretends not to *quarter* soldiers in Ireland, and therefore must be glad of a bill. It is time some of our wounds should close; or, I believe, I shall soon have too much employment, instead of wanting materials for letters.

99. *To the Countess of Upper Ossory*

[Aetat 62]

Strawberry Hill

Sept. 27, 1780

I rejoice in your triumph, Madam, though I cannot partake of your fireworks. Not only had I ordered my books to be advertised, but I have a more melancholy cause that detains me. The letters that I have received to-day from Paris bid me be prepared to receive an account of my dear old friend's¹ death. I knew she had been very ill, but till these two last posts, I had been flattered that she was recovering. To-day her own secretary, and Mr. T. Walpole, pronounced that there are

no

¹ Mme. du Deffand.

no hopes. I had sent James's powder, and had begged my cousin, if possible, to obtain her trying it—but alas! I knew France too well, and physicians too, and THEIR physicians still more, to have much hope of its being given; but it is too shocking to be told that the physician has laid aside all medicines, and yet would not suffer her to take it! When is it best to try it but in despair? and when, if not at eighty-four? He said it would vomit her, and kill her. Is not he killing her himself by trying nothing? and by not trying the powder in that case? This is a horrible thought, though she could not be immortal; and the terror I have been under for some time of her becoming deaf, added to blindness, had made me more reconciled to her great age, and to the probability of losing her. She retains, that is, did retain her senses, did not suffer, knew her situation, and was perfectly tranquil, and spoke little; but, by the whole description, she appears to me to have been almost worn out. I tremble for the next letter—though it is just as if I had already received it.—Another friend gone! I scarce have one left of above my own age. It is these memorandums that at the same time reconcile one to one's own departure. What can one expect but to survive one's friends if one lives long?—In this unhappy mood, Madam, I should be bad company. Can I care about elections? If an opponent's death could set Mr. Burke to moralizing on the hustings at Bristol, how must the loss of so dear a friend affect me! The savage physician exasperates me; what transport should I have felt, if I could have saved her, though but for six months! Perhaps I could not—I will not be unjust; it is probable that

I should not—but oh! not to ~~let~~ me try! It augments my abhorrence of physicians and professions. Long ago I said that the devil's three names, Satan, Lucifer, and Beelzebub, were given to him in his three capacities of president of priests, lawyers, and physicians. I repeat it now with rancour: Beelzebub and Bouvard are synonymous terms in my lexicon. Five years ago I loved the wretch, for he saved her, as I thought, in my presence—did that give him a right over her life? Has not he cancelled my gratitude? Can one love and hate at once? I would if I could—yes, I do thank him for prolonging her life for five years—but oh! professions, professions! how *l'esprit du corps* absorbs all feelings!—and how prejudiced becomes principle! Dear old woman, she is now, I fear, no more!—I can write no more, Madam, for I can write on no other subject, and have no right to torment you with my concern. You shall hear no more of it. Nature takes care that hopeless griefs should not be permanent, and I have seen so much affectation of lamentation where little was felt, and I know so well that I have often felt most where I have discovered least, that I will profane my affection to my lost friend with no ostentation—much less to those who never knew her. I live enough in solitude to indulge all my sensations, without troubling others.

P. S. Since I wrote my letter I have had another shock,—General Conway has broken his arm! Lady Aylesbury assures me there is as little bad as there can be in such an accident, and that I shall hear again to-morrow. Still I shall go to him on Friday.

100. *To the Countess of Upper Ossory*

[Ætæt 63]

Jan. 4, 1781

I return the Quipos, Madam, because if I retained them till I understand them, I fear you would never have them again. I should as soon be able to hold a dialogue with a rainbow, by the help of its grammar, a prism, for I have not yet discovered which is the first or last verse of four lines that hang like ropes of onions. Yet it is not for want of study, or want of respect for the Peruvian manner of writing. I perceive it is a very soft language, and, though at first I tangled the poem and spoiled the rhymes, yet I can conceive that a harlequin's jacket, artfully arranged by a princess of the blood of Mango Capac,¹ may contain a deep tragedy, and that a tawdry trimming may be a version of Solomon's Song. Nay, I can already say my alphabet of six colors, and know that each stands indiscriminately *but* for four letters, which gives the Peruvian a great advantage over the Hebrew tongue, in which the total want of vowels left every word at the mercy of the reader; and, though our salvation depended upon it, we did not know precisely what any word signified, till the invention of points, that were not used till the language had been obsolete for some thousands of years. A little uncertainty, as where one has but one letter instead of four, may give rise to many beauties. Puns must be greatly assisted by that ambiguity, and

¹ Manco Capac and Atahualpa (mentioned below) were the first and last Incas of Peru.—T.

and the delicacies of the language may depend on an almost imperceptible variation in the shades, as the perfection of the Chinese consists in possessing but very few syllables, each of which admits ten thousand accents, and thence pronunciation is the most difficult part of their literature.

At first sight, the resemblance of blue and green by candle-light seems to be an objection to the Peruvian; but any learned mercer might obviate that, by opposing indigo to grass-green, and ultra-marine to *verd de pomme*. The more expert one were at *nuances*, the more poetic one should be, or the more eloquent. A vermilion *A* must denote a weaker accent, or even passion, than one of carmine and crimson; and a straw-colour *U* be much more tender than one approaching to orange.

I have heard of a French perfumer who wrote an essay on the harmony of essences. Why should not that idea be extended? The Peruvian Quipos adapted a language to the eyes, rather than to the ears. Why should not there be one for the nose? The more the senses can be used indifferently for each other, the more our understandings would be enlarged. A rose, a jessamine, a pink, a jonquil, and a honeysuckle, might signify the vowels; the consonants to be represented by other flowers. The Cape jessamine, which has two smells, was born a diphthong. How charming it would be to smell an ode from a nosegay, and to scent one's handkerchief with a favourite song. Indeed, many improvements might be made on the Quipos themselves, especially as they might be worn, as well as perused. A trimming set on a new lute-string would be equivalent to a second edition with corrections. I

am only surprised that, in a country like Peru, where gold and silver thread were so cheap, there was no *clinquant* introduced into their poetry. In short, Madam, I am so pleased with the idea of knotting verses, which is vastly preferable to anagrams and acrostics, that if I were to begin life again, I would use a shuttle, instead of a pen, and write verses by the yard. As it is, I have not been idle; nay, like any heaven-born genius, I have begun to write before I can read; and, though I have not yet learned to decipher, I can at least cipher like Atahualpa himself. As a proof of my proficience, pray, Madam, construe the following colours:—

Brown, blue, white, yellow green yellow yellow white, red brown brown blue white.

As I was writing this last line, I received your Ladyship's interpretation of the verses. Whoever made them they are excellent, and it would have been cruel to deprive me of them till I could have unravelled them. Pray tell me who made them, for they are really good and sterling. I am sorry I expressed myself so awkwardly, that you thought I disapproved of the Quipos. On the contrary, you see how much they have amused me. In good truth, I was glad of anything that would occupy me, and turn my attention from all the horrors one hears or apprehends. I am sorry I have read the devastation of Barbadoes and Jamaica, &c., &c.; when one can do no good, can neither prevent nor redress, nor has any personal share, by oneself or one's friends, is it not excusable to steep one's attention in anything? I fear, Madam, you and Lord Ossory have a suffering friend: poor Mr. James, I hear, is totally
ruined

ruined—his whole property swept away! There is another dreadful history, less known: the expedition sent against the Spanish settlements is cut off by the climate, and not a single being is left alive. The Duchess of Bedford told me last night that the poor soldiers were so averse, that they were driven to the march by the point of the bayonet, and that, besides the men, twenty-five officers have perished.

Lord Cornwallis and his tiny army are scarce in a more prosperous way. On this dismal canvas a fourth war is embroidered; and what, I think, threatens still more, the French administration is changed, and likely to be composed of more active men, and much more hostile to England. Our ruin seems to me inevitable. Nay, I know those who smile in the Drawing-room, that groan by their fireside: they own we have no more men to send to America, and think our credit almost as nearly exhausted. Can you wonder, then, Madam, if I am glad to play with Quipos—Oh, no! nor can I be sorry to be on the verge—does one wish to live to weep over the ruins of Carthage?

101. *To the Rev. William Mason*

[Aetat 63]

Monday noon

Feb. 5, 1781

Perhaps you think, by my letters riding on the back of one another, that I am going to tell you of my Lord George Gordon. No, poor soul! he is at this minute in Westminster Hall, and I know nothing about him. Somehow or other I dare

dare to say the constitution will be brought in guilty, for Lord Mansfield is the judge. But I have other guess things to say to you: I have got your *Fresnoy*; it is a new proof of what I have long thought, that there is nothing you cannot do if you please. This is the best translation I ever saw; there have been disputes between literal and paraphrastic translations; and no wonder, for a third sort, the true, was not known; yours preserves the sense and substance of every sentence, but you make a new arrangement, and state and express the author's thought better than he could. Horace would have excused you if you had been simply familiar in a didactic poem, but you would not be so excused, nor allow yourself negligence in your poetry. You have exchanged the poverty of Fresnoy's Latin for Pope's rich English, and every epithet contributes its quota to every precept and develops it. This is in the style of none of your other works, and though more difficult, as masterly as any: in short, I have examined it with admiration, and only wonder how, with such powers and knowledge of the subject, you could confine yourself to the *matter* of the original. The shackles of translation have neither cramped your style, nor rendered it obscure; you have enriched your author without deviating, and improved his matter without adding to it, which is an achievement indeed. I do not flatter you; nay, you know I am frank enough upon most occasions, and were I porter of the Temple of Fame, I would not open the door to one of your babes, if it was not like you.

I think I shall soon compass a transcript at least of *Gray's Life*

Life by Demogorgon¹ for you. I saw him last night at Lady Lucan's, who has assembled a *blue stocking* meeting in imitation of Mrs. Vesey's Babels. It was so blue, it was quite Mazarine-blue. Mrs. Montagu kept aloof from Johnson, like the West from the East. There were Soame Jenyns, *Persian* Jones, Mr. Sherlocke, the new court with Mr. Courtenay, besides the out-pensioners of Parnassus. Mr. Wraxhall² was not—I wonder why, and so will he, for he is popping into every spot where he can make himself talked of, by talking of himself; but I hear he will come to an untimely beginning in the House of Commons.

I shall return your *Fresnoy* as soon as I have gone through it once more, that Sir Joshua may go to work. I have proposed a subject to him that he seems to like; *Little children brought to Christ*. He will not make them all brothers, like Albano's Cupids.

Pray look into the last *Critical Review* but one; there you will find that David Hume in a saucy blockheadly note calls Locke, Algernon Sidney, and Bishop Hoadly, *despicable writers*. I believe that ere long the Scotch will call the English *lousy!* and that Goody Hunter will broach the assertion in an anatomic lecture. Not content with debasing and disgracing us as a nation by losing America, destroying our Empire, and making us the scorn and prey of Europe, the Scotch would annihilate our patriots, martyrs, heroes, and geniuses. Algernon Sidney, Lord Russell, King William, the Duke of Marlborough

¹ Dr. Johnson.—T.

² Nathaniel William Wraxall (1751-1831), the memoir writer.—T.

Marlborough, Locke, are to be traduced and levelled, and with the aid of their fellow-labourer Johnson, who spits at them while he tugs at the same oar, Milton, Addison, Prior and Gray are to make way for the dull forgeries of Ossian, and such wights as Davy,¹ and Johnny Home,² Lord Kames,³ Lord Monboddo,⁴ and Adam Smith!⁵ Oh, if you have a drop of English ink in your veins, rouse and revenge your country! Do not let us be run down and brazened out of all our virtue, genius, sense, and taste, by Laplanders and Boeotians, who never produced one original writer in verse or prose.

Tuesday morning

My servants tell me, for I have yet seen nobody else to-day, that Lord George was acquitted at five this morning—a wise inanoeuvre truly has been made; they punish him severely for eight months, and cannot convict him! now he will be a confessor. I must finish, for I have just heard that Lady Orford⁶ is dead, and must write to my family and order mourning, &c. I doubt this letter is no retaining fee to Mr. Palgrave.

The

¹ Charles Davy (1722-1797), miscellaneous writer who published, among other solemn works, *Conjectural Observations on the Origin and Progress of Alphabetical Writing*.

² John Home (1722-1808), author of *Douglas, Siege of Aquilca* and many even worse plays. He was secretary to Lord Bute and tutor to the Prince of Wales.

³ Henry Home, Lord Kames (1696-1782). Scottish judge and author who attacked Hume.

⁴ James Burnett, Lord Monboddo (1744-1799). He was the friend of Johnson and Boswell and was chiefly celebrated for his *Ancient Metaphysics*, in which he asserted his belief in a race of men with tails.

⁵ The author of *The Wealth of Nations*.

⁶ Margaret Rolle, Countess of Orford, widow of Horace Walpole's eldest brother. She died at Pisa on Jan. 13, 1781, aged seventy-one.—T. She was profligate and unprincipled, and Walpole detested her.

102. To the Rev. William Mason

[Aetat 63]

Berkeley Square

Feb. 9, 1781

The lost sheep is found; but I have more joy in one just person than in ninety and nine sinners that do not repent; in short, the renegade Gibbon is returned to me, after ten or eleven weeks, and pleads having been five of them at Bath. I immediately forgave even his return; yet pray do not imagine that I write to announce this recovery; no! it is to impart what he told me. He says that somebody asked Johnson if he was not afraid that *you* would resent the freedoms he has taken with Gray, 'No, no, Sir; Mr. Mason does not like rough handling.' I hope in the Muses that you will let him see which had most reason to fear rough handling. The saucy Caliban! I don't know when I shall get you his blubber,¹ but I have sent again to my bookseller about it.

I have restored your *Fresnoy* with regret. The more I have studied it the better I like it—it will always be standard. I repeat that there is the precise sense of every sentence, and yet they are not translated. They are like the same pair of legs, before being taught to dance and afterwards. *Fresnoy* gives the precepts, and you tell him how to state and enounce them. As I have ambition of appertaining to your poem, I humbly beg leave to amend one word, in a certain line towards the end; for

'Sons of her choice and sharers of her fire,'

read 'partners.'

You

¹ Johnson's *Life of Gray*.—T.

You will laugh, especially after my last letter, when I tell you that I am chosen honorary member of the Society of the Antiquaries of Scotland. I received the notification since I began this letter. Lord Buchan, the founder (under the patronage of Saint Bute), was many years ago a little my acquaintance; I have not even seen him at least these dozen years, nor ever had any correspondence with him but once, about two years ago, when he wrote to ask me what portraits of Scottish kings or queens I knew of in England. It is impossible to have less respect than I have for Societies of Antiquaries, who seldom do anything but grow antiquated themselves. However, as an honorary title exacts neither function nor *vote*, I have accepted it civilly, especially as it will show contempt for our own fools, from amongst whom I scratched out my name. However, I conceive that the bones of my memory may some time or other be dug up and burned at Edinburgh, as Peter Martyr's were at Oxford.

My new dignity of F. S. S. A. will not comport with amusing Mr. Palgrave to-day. I have taken an oath on Ossian to have no imagination, no invention; for forgeries are *intentions*, not *inventions*. Still I shall not wear my new plaid robes and blue bonnet beyond my inauguration week, and shall soon relapse into a South Briton; though if I should say *The 15, The 45*, you will remember my connection north of the Tweed.

P. S. Is not it droll that I, who never sought for, canvassed for, or received any mark of distinction in my days, should receive a compliment from Edinburgh?

It

103. *To the Rev. William Mason*

[Aetat 63]

Monday night, Feb. 19, 1781

It has not been from want of materials, if I had chosen to work them up, that I have not written to you very lately; but though I hold it delectable enough in one's dotage to prattle and gossip of the doings of the courts of one's younger days, I do not think it so decorous to invert one's Brantôme-hood and limp after and repeat the tattle of Drawing-rooms that are scarce fledged. A sovereign may be philosopher or concentrated enough in his own rays to disregard terrestrial tempests, and to be more occupied by the spots in his own orbit than by the mouldering away of his empire. For my part I have too much mortal clay about me to soar so much above matter, and to divert myself only with the music or discord of the spheres.

All this tedious proem is but to say that I have not wanted news, ay, and news that employs this whole town, if I would have condescended to tell you who has or who has not been at Cumberland House, or at the Queen's ball, or how King George and his brother, Duke Henry, have quarrelled about the servants of the Prince of Wales not being suffered to dine with his Royal Highness Duke Henry, and how Duke Henry was not invited to the ball at the Queen's House, with a deal of such scimble scramble stuff, which has totally obliterated the memory of all the wars that we have with all the world. Do
not

not be surprised; if we attended to anything above such puerilities, we should not be in the situation we are. I still do believe that distress will at last open our eyes, but I believe, too, that we shall soon shut them again. There is not energy enough left in us to produce any effect. One may judge from the *nature* of our dissipations as much as from the dissipation itself. The age that souses into every amusement and folly that is presented to it, has not imagination enough to strike out anything of itself. Mrs. Cornelys, Almack, and Dr. Graham are forced to advertise diversions by public sale, and everybody goes indolently and mechanically to them all, without choice or preference. They who are *called the people of fashion* or the *ton* have contributed nothing of their own but *being too late*; nay, actually do go to most public diversions after they are over. Your Yorkshire reformers, though not content with Mr. Burke's bill, will gather no prophetic comfort from the treatment it received to-day. I was at Mrs. Delany's this evening, when Mr. Frederic Montagu arrived from the House. They had put off the second reading till Friday, because Wednesday is the Fast Day, and Thursday Vestris's benefit. God has His day, a French dancer his, and then the national senate will be at leisure to think whether it will save three-halfpence-farthing out of eighteen millions that are to be raised in hopes of protracting the war, till we want at least eighteen millions more.

Was not you edified with the last *Gazette*? When we expected to hear that all Washington's army was caughted in a drag-net

drag-net, and that Lord Cornwallis had subdued and pacified all Virginia and Carolina, we were modestly told that his Lordship and his handful of men had been sick, but, thank you, are a little better; and that Colonel Ferguson was beaten, and Colonel Tarleton had had a puny advantage; all which we knew two months ago.

To-day we are very sorry for what however we do not care a straw about. Well, the grand fleet, that was to fetch home Gibraltar and place it out of harm's way in the Isle of Sky, cannot sail. Governor Johnstone, the honestest man in the world, has written to Lord Hillsborough (for he would not trust Lord Sandwich, whom a fortnight ago he thought the second man in honesty in *South* Britain) complaining that the fleet is rotten, and cannot sail; nay, he has sent up a yard and a half of worm-eaten plank, which he humbly begs his Majesty himself will taste and be convinced. I do not answer for a syllable of truth in this narrative, though it was told me by a Scottish Earl who never gave a vote in his days against any court.

I have not yet been able to get you *Gray's Life*. My bookseller had blundered, and after trusting to him so long, he brought me the preceding volumes: but I am on a new scent, and hope at least to send you a transcript of that single *Life*; though I wish you to see the whole set, nay, those old ones; I dipped into them, and found that the tasteless pedant¹ admires that wretched buffoon Dr. King, who is but a Tom Brown in rhyme; and says that *The Dispensary*, that *chef-d'oeuvre*, can
scarce

¹ Dr. Johnson.

scarce make itself read. This is prejudice on both sides, equal to that monkish railer Père Garasse. But Dr. Johnson has indubitably neither taste nor ear, criterion of judgement, but his old woman's prejudices; where they are wanting, he has no rule at all; he prefers Smith's poetic, but insipid and undramatic *Phædra and Hippolitus* to Racine's *Phèdre*, the finest tragedy in my opinion of the French theatre, for, with Voltaire's leave, I think it infinitely preferable to *Iphigénie*, and so I own I do *Britannicus*, *Mahomet*, *Alzire*, and some others; but I will allow Johnson to dislike Gray, Garth, Prior—ay, and every genius we have had, when he cries up Blackmore, Thomson, Akenside, and Dr. King; nay, I am glad that the measure of our dullness is full. I would have this era stigmatize itself in every respect, and be a proverb to the nations around, and to future ages. We want but Popery to sanctify every act of blindness. Hume should burn the works of Locke, and Johnson of Milton, and the atheist and the bigot join in the same religious rites, as they both were pensioned by the same piety. Oh, let us not have a ray of sense or throb of sensation left to distinguish us from brutes! let total stupefaction palliate our fall, and let us resemble the Jews, who when they were to elect a god, preferred a calf!

Tuesday

Upon stricter inquiry, I find that Johnson has not yet published his new *Lives*, but only given away a few copies.

An account is said to be come from New York, that above two thousand of Washington's army have left him for want
of

of pay, but, remain encamped at some distance; have refused to join Clinton, and have sent to the Congress that they will return to Washington if they are paid; if not, that they will not disband. Governor Johnstone's remonstrance is already whittled down to a complaint of one particular ship not being ready.

2nd P. S. Lord Harcourt has got me from Taylor at Bath the method of the aquatinta, which I have sent to Mr. Stonhewer this morning to transmit to him.

104. *To the Rev. William Mason*

[Aetat 63]

Berkeley Square

March 3, 1781

I began to be a little out of humour at your silence; your letter came in time, just as I was going to seal up my lips too. An echo that will repeat one word twenty times will stop, unless you feed it anew, though but with a single word. This time, no more than the echo, had I any need to lift up my voice.

The war is gone to sleep, the Parliament gone to bed, and Vestris himself,¹ if he had any competitor, would go out of fashion. Invention, except of political lies, is not the gift of

¹Just as I had finished my letter, I learned the dreadful calamity that happened at the Opera House last night. The theatre was brimful in expectation of Vestris. At the end of the second act he appeared; but with so much grace, agility, and strength that the whole audience fell into convulsions of applause: the men thundered; the ladies, forgetting their delicacy and weakness, clapped with such vehemence that seventeen broke their arms, sixty-nine sprained their wrists, and three cried bravo! bravissimo! so rashly, that they have not been able to utter so much as *no* since, any more than both Houses of Parliament.—Letter to Lady Ossory, Dec. 17, 1780.

of this age. For want of subject of admiration, Sir Joseph Yorke is called by the newspapers a great man, and for want of taste the Monthly Reviewers call Mr. Hayley a great poet, though he has no more ear or imagination than they have. As if anybody loved reading, or did read, Mr. Gibbon has treated them with his vast two volumes. I have almost finished the last, and some parts are more entertaining than the other, and yet it has tired me, and so I think it did himself. There is no spirit in it, nor does any one chapter interest one more than another; which is commonly the case of compilations, especially in such an eloquent age as this. Though these volumes are not polished like the first, you see that he is never thinking of his subject, but intending to make his periods worthy of himself. Then he is often obscure, for from the prodigious quantity of matter he frequently is content with alluding to his original; and who for mercy would recur to Sozomen, Jornandez, and Procopius? Then having both the Eastern and Western empires on his hands at once, and nobody but *imbécilles* and their eunuchs at the head, one is confused with two subjects, that are quite alike, though quite distinct; and in the midst of this distraction enters a deluge of Alans, Huns, Goths, Ostrogoths, and Visigoths, who with the same features and characters are to be described in different terms, without any essential variety, and he is to bring you acquainted with them when you wish them all at the bottom of the Red Sea. He has made me a present of these volumes, and I am sure I shall have fully paid for them when I have finished them: one paragraph I
must

must select, which I believe the author did not intend should be so applicable to the present moment. 'The Armorican provinces of Gaul and the greatest part of Spain were thrown into a state of disorderly independence by the confederations of the Bagaudæ; and the imperial ministers pursued with proscriptive laws and ineffectual arms the rebels whom they had made.' End of chap. XXXV. This is also a sample of the style which is translating bad Latin into English, that may be turned into classic Latin. I was charmed, as I owned, with the enamel of the first volume, but I am tired by this rhetoric diction, and wish again for Bishop Burnet's *And so*.

They who write of their own times love or hate the actors, and draw you to their party; but with the fear of the *laws* of history before his eyes, a compiler affects you no more than a Chancery suit about the entail of an estate with whose owners you was not acquainted. Poor Lord Lyttelton was of all that tribe the most circumspect, and consequently the most insipid. His *Henry II* raises no more passions than Burn's *Justice of Peace*. Apropos, '*poor Lyttelton*' were the words of offence. Mrs. Vesey sounded the trumpet. It has not, I believe, produced any altercation, but at a blue-stocking meeting held by Lady Lucan, Mrs. Montagu and Dr. Johnson kept at different ends of the chamber, and set up altar against altar there. There she told me as a mark of her high displeasure, that she would never ask him to dinner again. I took her side, and fomented the quarrel, and wished I could have made Dagon and Ash-tarqth scold in Coptic.

I am happy that you like Mr. Conway's speech, and the *Concio ad Clerum*.¹ The Duke of Grafton, with whom I dined the other day with Mr. Conway and Stonhewer told us that the Flamen most offended is Bishop Keene. I do believe he is one of the most sore, for he is one of the most putrid; but he must be ten times more angry at his own son, who spoke on Monday *for* Burke's bill. Lord Chatham's second son,² they say, was far more like *his* father. Sheridan demolished Courtenay, who, old George Cavendish said well, is deputy buffoon to Lord North.

I am sorry you have lost Palgrave, and wish you could tempt him to meet you at Strawberry Hill.

Sir Joshua, I doubt, will not have time soon to expedite your *Fresnoy*; it must be much altered, or I should marvel at Gray;³ for Bishop Hurd you know I never admired him, even before he was mitred. All his writings are tame, without a grain of originality. I shall always maintain that you have made a masterly poem from a very moderate one, without adding to the author's sense. If that is not the perfection of translation, I do not know what is. I am very sensible that you could have added more gold, but who ever gilt so well? This I take to be the precise definition of a good translation, which improves base metal without adding ore. Adieu.

I

¹ Apparently some remarks addressed to the bishops in Conway's recently published speech.—T.

² William Pitt the younger entered Parliament as member for Appleby in Jan. 1781. 'He made his first speech on 26 Feb. in support of Burke's bill for economical reform. The House expected much of Chatham's son, and was not disappointed. Perfectly at his ease, and in a voice full of melody and force, he set forth his opinions in well-ordered succession and in the best possible words.' (D.N.B.)—T.

³ Gray and Hurd tried to dissuade Mason from translating Fresnoy's poem.—T.

105. *To the Rev. William Mason*

[Aetat 63]

May 22, 1781

I am pleased that you think seriously of making me a visit soon, but you might have retrenched the comfort you hold out of its being a very short one. As you come as seldom as a comet, I should not have been alarmed, if you intended to stay as long. My publication¹ shall certainly not precede your arrival. I can scarce even call that delay a compliment, having already suspended its appearance. In short, my advertisement prevented the spurious editions, and I flatter myself I am forgotten; at least I have gained time, and at worst will publish in July or August, when all the world is dispersed, and I can trust the fickleness of the age for not recollecting in winter what passed after the prodigious interval of three months. Should any national calamity happen, no incredible event, I will turn the ill wind to private good, and steal out, while the consternation lasts.

Your objection to the play I allow to be fully just, and I know fifty others, but don't imagine I will correct anything; no, that would show predilection and partiality to it; partiality I have, but it is to your corrections, and it shall have none other; I have said the truth. I think your alterations marvellous, and it is favourable to the tragedy, that it could produce your alterations and Lady Di's drawings; you shall have the full honours of yours, for, first or last, they shall stand by themselves

¹ The second edition of *The Mysterious Mother*.

themselves in your name.¹ I have no jealousy; I allow you full superiority, and will always avow it, and have more pleasure in the fame of my friends than appetite for it myself. As to *The Mysterious Mother* being acted I am perfectly secure, at least while Lord Hertford is Lord Chamberlain; nay, whoever should succeed him I think would not license it without my consent; but enough on a subject of which I am sick and weary, and yet I have nothing to replace it.

It was not from me, I assure you, that you have received any defence of Milton, nor do I know anything of it, but what you tell me, that it is in the *Memoirs* of Hollis. Boswell, that quintessence of busybodies, called on me last week, and was let in, which he should not have been, could I have foreseen it. After tapping many topics, to which I made as dry answers as an unbribed oracle, he vented his errand. 'Had I seen Dr. Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*?' I said, slightly, 'No, not yet'; and so overlaid his whole impertinence. As soon as he could recover himself, with Caledonian sincerity, he talked of Macklin's new play, and pretended to like it, which would almost make one suspect that he knows a dose of poison has already been administered; though, by the way, I hear there is little good in the piece, except the likeness of Sir Pertinax to twenty thousand Scots.

You will find that I have gotten a new idol—in a word, a successor to Rosette, and almost as great a favourite; nor is this a breach of vows and constancy, but an act of piety. In a word, my poor dear old friend Madame du Deffand had a little dog
of

¹ These alterations were first published by Mr. Montagu Somers in 1924.

of which she was extremely fond, and the last time I saw her she made me promise, if I should survive her, to take charge of it. I did. It is arrived, and I was going to say, it is incredible how fond I am of it, but I have no occasion to brag of my dogmanity. I dined at Richmond House t'other day, and mentioning whither I was going, the Duke said 'Own the truth, shall not you call at home first and see Tonton?' He guessed rightly. He is now sitting on my paper as I write—not the Duke, but Tonton.

I know no public matters but what the newspapers tell you as well as me. Darby is come home, but Gibraltar is in a manner destroyed by the Spanish bombs. The Dutch fleet is hovering about, but it is a pickpocket war, and not a martial one, and I never attend to petty larceny. Adieu!

106. *To the Countess of Upper Ossory*

[Aetat 64]

Strawberry Hill

Oct. 7, 1781

I beg your Ladyship's pardon for not returning the History of Fotheringay, which I now enclose.

The new Veres has been returned to England these six weeks, and I visited them at their palace (as it really was of Henry VIII) at Hanworth not long after their arrival. All their near kin have done so too, and *tout s'est passé comme si de rien n'étoit*. Their fellow traveller is left behind. We live in such an awkward unfashionable nook here, that we have not yet heard

heard Lord Vere's will, nor know whether Lord Richard Cavendish is dead or alive. *I* am so much awkwarder still, and treasure up scandal so little, that, though I heard the Brightelmstone story, I have quite forgotten who the principal personage was—so you will not fear my repeating it. I do not design to know a circumstance about Admiral Rodney and Admiral Fergusson. We are to appearance at war with half Europe and a quarter of America, and yet our warfare is only fending and proving, and is fitter for the Quarter Sessions than for history. It costs us seventeen or eighteen millions a year to inquire whether our Generals and Admirals are rogues or fools; and, since most of them are only one or t'other, I would not give half a crown to know which. The nation is such an oaf as to amuse itself with these foolish discussions, and does not perceive that six years and above forty millions, and half our territories, have been thrown away in such idle pastime. How the grim heroes of Edward III and Henry V would stare at hearing that this is our way of making war on France!

The night I had the honour of writing to your Ladyship last, I was robbed—and, as if I were a sovereign or a nation, have had a discussion ever since whether it was not a *neighbour* who robbed me—and should it come to the ears of the newspapers, it might produce as ingenious a controversy amongst our anonymous wits as any of the noble topics I have been mentioning. *Voici le fait*. Lady Browne and I were, as usual, going to the Duchess of Montrose at seven o'clock. The evening was very dark. In the close lane under her park-pale,
and

and within twenty yards of the gate, a black figure on horse-back pushed by between the chaise and the hedge on my side. I suspected it was a highwayman, and so I found did Lady Browne, for she was speaking and stopped. To divert her fears, I was just going to say, 'Is not that the apothecary going to the Duchess?' when I heard a voice cry 'Stop!' and the figure came back to the chaise. I had the presence of mind, before I let down the glass, to take out my watch and stuff it within my waistcoat under my arm. He said, 'Your purse and watches!' I replied, 'I have no watch.' 'Then your purse!' I gave it to him; it had nine guineas. It was so dark that I could not see his hand, but felt him take it. He then asked for Lady Browne's purse, and said, 'Don't be frightened; I will not hurt you.' I said, 'No; you won't frighten the lady?' He replied, 'No; I give you my word I will do you no hurt.' Lady Browne gave him her purse, and was going to add her watch, but he said, 'I am much obliged to you! I wish you good night!' pulled off his hat, and rode away. 'Well?' said I, 'Lady Browne, you will not be afraid of being robbed another time, for you see there is nothing in it.' 'Oh, but I am,' said she, 'and now I am in terrors lest he should return, for I have given him a purse with only bad money that I carry on purpose.' 'He certainly will not open it directly,' said I, 'and at worst he can only wait for us at our return; but I will send my servant back for a horse and a blunderbuss,' which I did. The next distress was not to terrify the Duchess, who is so paralytic and nervous. I therefore made Lady Browne go into the parlour,
and

and desired one of the Duchess's servants to get her a glass of water, while I went into the drawing-room to break it to the Duchess. 'Well,' said I, laughing to her and the rest of the company, 'you won't get much from us to-night.' 'Why,' said one of them, 'have you been robbed?' 'Yes, a little,' said I. The Duchess trembled; but it went off. Her groom of the chambers said not a word, but slipped out, and Lady Margaret and Miss Howe having servants there on horseback, he gave them pistols and dispatched them different ways. This was exceedingly clever, for he knew the Duchess would not have suffered it, as lately he had detected a man who had robbed her garden, and she would not allow him to take up the fellow. These servants spread the story, and when my footman arrived on foot, he was stopped in the street by the hostler of the 'George', who told him the highwayman's horse was then in the stable; but this part I must reserve for the second volume, for I have made this no story so long and so tedious that your Ladyship will not be able to read it in a breath; and the second part is so much longer and so much less, contains so many examinations of witnesses, so many contradictions in the depositions, which I have taken myself, and, I must confess, with such abilities and shrewdness that I have found out nothing at all, that I think to defer the prosecution of my narrative till all the other inquiries on the anvil are liquidated, lest your Ladyship's head, strong as it is, should be confounded, and you should imagine that Rodney or Ferguson was the person who robbed us in Twickenham Lane. I would not have
detailed

detailed the story at all if you ~~were~~ not in a forest, where it will serve to put you to sleep as well as a newspaper full of lies; and I am sure there is as much dignity in it as in the combined fleet, and ours popping in and out alternately, like a man and woman in a weather-house.

107. *To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway*

[Aetat 64]

Berkeley Square

Sunday morning, Nov. 18, 1781

I have been here again for three days, tending and nursing and waiting on Mr. Jephson's play. I have brought it into the world, was well delivered of it, it can stand on its own legs—and I am going back to my own quiet hill, never likely to have anything more to do with theatres. Indeed it has seemed strange to me, who for these three or four years have not been so many times in a play-house, nor knew six of the actors by sight, to be at two rehearsals, behind the scenes, in the green-room and acquainted with half the company. *The Count of Narbonne*¹ was played last night with great applause, and without a single murmur of disapprobation. Miss Younge has charmed me. She played with intelligence that was quite surprising. The applause to one of her speeches lasted a minute, and recommenced twice before the play could go on. I am sure you will be pleased with the conduct and the easy beautiful language of the play, and struck with her acting.

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¹ By Robert Jephson. It was a dramatization of *The Castle of Otranto*.

108. *To the Rev. William Mason*

[*Ætæt 64*]

Berkeley Square

Nov. 26, 1781, late at night

I came to town to-day at two o'clock, and found the town in a hubbub on the news of Lord Cornwallis and his whole army being made prisoners; but the Speech and two majorities to-morrow will send them all easy again to the opera by night.

I cannot tell you a word more of this mishap than Mr. Stenhewer has told you, whom I met this evening at Lady Cecilia's and who has written to you. Mr. Macpherson, who publishes our daily creed, has been proclaiming that Lord Cornwallis has vowed he would never pile up his arms like Burgoyne. I do not know whether this was to keep up our spirits or not, but it puts the hero in a ridiculous light, which is the way in which heroes are treated of late, when they can be no longer of use; it saves rewards.

I have heard nothing else, nor was this repetition worth sending, but it proves I am not negligent.

I have been plagued about Mr. Jephson's play—nay, I am so still, for though I did prevail on Mr. Harris to act it, who had been ill-used about it, and on Miss Younge to play the mother, which she has done to admiration; and though it has succeeded perfectly, the author is dissatisfied. I had four sides last week, and to-night another letter of eight pages, to scold me for letting the statue on the tomb be cumbent instead
of

of erect. In short, I do not wonder he is a poet, for he is distracted: he shall act his next play himself for me.

When you come to town I can show you a thousand curious things, from Madame du Deffand's papers, but I believe I did mention them before. When one repeats oneself, it is plain one grows old, or has nothing to say.

109. *To the Rev. William Mason*

[Aetat 64]

[1782?]

I have been reading a new French translation of the elder Pliny, of whom I never read but scraps before; because, in the poetical manner in which we learn Latin at Eton, we never become acquainted with the names of the commonest things, too undignified to be admitted into verse; and, therefore, I never had patience to search in a dictionary for the meaning of every substantive. I find I shall not have a great deal less trouble with the translation, as I am not more familiar with their common *drogues* than with the Latin. However, the beginning goes off very glibly, as I am not yet arrived below the planets: but do you know that this study, of which I have never thought since I learnt astronomy at Cambridge, has furnished me with some very entertaining ideas! I have long been weary of the common jargon of poetry. You bards have exhausted all the nature we are acquainted with; you have treated us with the sun, moon, and stars, the earth and the ocean, mountains and valleys, etc., etc., under every possible aspect

aspect. In short, I have longed for some American poetry, in which I might find new appearances of nature, and consequently of art.

But my present excursion into the sky has afforded me more entertaining prospects, and newer phenomena. If I was as good a poet as you are, I would immediately compose an idyl, or an elegy, the scene of which should be laid in Saturn or Jupiter; and then, instead of a niggardly soliloquy by the light of a single moon, I would describe a night illuminated by four or five moons at least, and they should be all in a perpendicular or horizontal line, according as Celia's eyes (who probably in that country has at least two pair) are disposed in longitude or latitude. You must allow that this system would diversify poetry amazingly.—And then Saturn's belt! which the translator says in his notes, is not round the planet's waist, like the shingles; but is a globe of crystal that encloses the whole orb, as you may have seen an enamelled watch in a case of glass. If you do not perceive what infinitely pretty things may be said, either in poetry or romance, on a brittle heaven of crystal, and what furbelowed rainbows they must have in that country, you are neither the Ovid nor natural philosopher I take you for.

Pray send me an eclogue directly upon this plan; and I give you leave to adopt my idea of Saturnian Celias having their everything quadrupled—which would form a much more entertaining rhapsody than Swift's thought of magnifying or diminishing the species in his *Gulliver*. How much more execution a fine woman would do with two pair of piercers! or four! and how much longer the honeymoon would last, if both

the

the sexes have (as no doubt they have) four times the passions, and four times the means of gratifying them!

I have opened new worlds to you.—You must be four times the poet you are, and then you will be above Milton and equal to Shakespeare, the only two mortals I am acquainted with who ventured beyond the visible diurnal sphere, and preserved their intellects. Dryden himself would have talked nonsense, and, I fear, indecency, on my plan; but you are too good a divine, I am sure, to treat my quadruple love but platonically. In Saturn, notwithstanding their glass-case, they are supposed to be very cold; but platonic love of itself produces frigid conceits enough, and you need not augment the dose.—But I will not dictate. The subject is new; and you, who have so much imagination, will shoot far beyond me. Fontenelle would have made something of the idea, even in prose; but Algarotti would dishearten anybody from attempting to meddle with the system of the universe a second time in a genteel dialogue. Good night! I am going to bed.—Mercy on me! if I should dream of Celia with four times the usual attractions!

110. *To the Rev. William Mason*

[Aetat 64]

Berkeley Square

June 25, 1782

I find there is a correspondence commenced between you and Mr. Hayley by the Parnassus post.¹ I did not know you were acquainted; I suppose you met at Calliope's: if you love incense,
he

¹ Hayley had published *An Essay on Epic Poetry, in Five Epistles, to the Rev. Mr. Mason.*—T.

he has fumigated you like a flitch of bacon. However, I hope in the Lord Phoebus that you will not take his advice any more than Pope did that of such another sing-song warbler, Lord Lyttelton; nor be persuaded to write an epic poem (that most senseless of all the species of poetic composition, and which pedants call the *chef-d'oeuvre* of the human mind); well, you may frown, as in duty bound, yet I shall say what I list.

Epic poetry is the art of being as long as possible in telling an uninteresting story; and an epic poem is a mixture of history without truth, and of romance without imagination. We are well off when from that *mesalliance* there spring some bastards called episodes, that are lucky enough to resemble their romantic mother, more than their solemn father. So far from epic poetry being at the head of composition, I am persuaded that the reason why so exceedingly few have succeeded is from the absurdity of the species. When nothing has been impossible to genius in every other walk, why has everybody failed in this but the inventor, Homer? You will stare, but what are the rest? Virgil, with every beauty of expression and harmony that can be conceived, has accomplished but an insipid imitation. His hero is a nullity, like Mellefont¹ and the virtuous characters of every comedy, and some of his incidents, as the harpies and the ships turned to nymphs, as silly as Mother Goose's Tales. Milton, all imagination, and a thousand times more sublime and spirited, has produced a monster. Lucan, who often says more in half a line than Virgil in a whole book, was lost in bombast if he talked for thirty lines together.

Claudian

¹ A character in Congreve's *Double Dealer*.—T.

Claudian and Statius had all his fustian with none of his quintessence. Camoens had more true grandeur than they, but with grosser faults. Dante was extravagant, absurd, disgusting, in short, a Methodist parson in Bedlam. Ariosto was a more agreeable Amadis de Gaul in a bawdy-house, and Spenser, John Bunyan in rhyme. Tasso wearies one with their insuperable crime of stanza and by a thousand puerilities that are the very opposite of that dull dignity which is demanded for epic: and Voltaire, who retained his good sense in heroics, lost his spirit and fire in them. In short, epic poetry is like what it first celebrated, the heroes of a world that knew nothing better than courage and conquest. It is not suited to an improved and polished state of things. It has continued to degenerate from the founder of the family, and happily expired in the last bastard of the race, Ossian.

Still, as Mr. Hayley has allowed such a latitude to heroic poesy as to admit the *Lutrin*, *The Dispensary*, and *The Dunciad* as epic poems, I can forgive a man who recommends to a friend to pen a tragedy when he will accept of *The Way of the World* as one.

For Mr. Hayley himself, though he chants in good tune, and has now and then pretty lines amongst several both prosaic and obscure, he has, I think, no genius, no fire, and not a grain of *originality*, the first of merits (in my eyes) in these latter ages, and a more certain mark of genius than in the infancy of the world, when no ground was broken, nor even, in the sportsman's phrase, *foiled*. It is that originality that I admire in your *Heroic Epistle* and in your genuine style,
which

which, I trust, you will not quit to satisfy the impartial Mr. Hayley (who, though a good patriot, equally cherishes janizaries)

*That to you do not belong
The beauties of envenomed song.*

For writing an epic poem, it would be as wise to set about copying Noah's ark, if Mons. de Buffon should beg you to build a menagerie for a couple of every living creatures upon earth, when there is no longer any danger of a general inundation.

I doubt your new friend will write his readers and his own reputation to death; every poem has a train of prose as long as Cheapside, with a vast parade of reading that would be less dear if it had any novelty or vivacity to recommend it. I know as little new as he, except that Lord Rockingham is very ill. I believe not without danger; should he fall, there would be a new scene indeed! Adieu!

P. S. I find I have said above, every living *creatures*: is not that bad English? and if it is, is not it better—than *a couple of every living creature*?

III. To Earl Harcourt

[Ætæt 64]

Strawberry Hill

Sept. 7, 1782

I am most impatient, my dear Lord, for an account of the conclusion of all the various and great works carrying on at
Nuneham

Nuneham. I am earnest to hear, that the house is finished, that the tower designed by Mr. Mason is ready to receive my painted glass, that he has written several novelties, and is coming to make me a visit as he promised, and that Lady Harcourt has settled, and had transcribed the MS. that I am to print. These things, and perhaps a great many more, I conclude, have been pursued with unremitting diligence, as no soul has had a moment's time to send me a line; though Mr. Mason is so punctual a correspondent, that I know he would not have been so long silent, if he had not been so occupied by the works at Nuneham, which he knows, I prefer to my own satisfaction. However, as all must be terminated in two or three days, I beg that the first holiday after the masons, bricklayers, upholsterers, muses, and amanuenses are paid off, that somebody or other will tell me the society are well, and have not broke their necks off a scaffold, nor their bones by a fall from Pegasus.

By my little specimen in Strawberry, I guess that Nuneham is in the highest beauty. As a whole, summer has been spent on decorating autumn with verdure, leaves, and rivers. Your Lordship's Thames must be brimful. I never saw it such a Ganges at this time of year: it is none of your home-brewed rivers that people make with a drain, half a bridge, and a clump of evergreens, and then overlay with the model of a ship.

I know nothing, for I live as if I were just arrived from Syria, and were performing quarantine. Nobody dares stir out of their own house. We are robbed and murdered if we do but step over the threshold to the chandler's shop for a pennyworth of plums. Lady Margaret Mordaunt is at Petersham
with

with Lady Cecilia, and they are to dine here next week, if Admiral Millbank is returned from the Baltic, and they can obtain a convoy. Dame Cliveden¹ is the only heroine amongst all us old dowagers: she is so much recovered that she ventures to go out cruising on all the neighbours, and has made a miraculous draught of fishes.

My nieces² are gone to Hackwood, and thence are to meet their sister and Lord Chewton at Weymouth. I have heard a whisper of a little miscarriage: it must have been a very small one. The Duchess,³ when I heard last, was at Lausanne, but going to Geneva, and intended a visit to Madame de Virri, who is within three hours of the former. I do not know whither bound next.

Has your Lordship seen Mr. Tyrwhitt's book in answer to Mr. Bryant and Dr. Archimage? It is as good as arguments and proofs can be after what is much better, wit and ridicule. As Mr. Mason is absorbed in Fresnoy and Associations, I conclude he does not condescend to look at such trifles as Archaeologic Epistles, and dissertations on the language of Chaucer.

Charles Fox is languishing at the feet of Mrs. Robinson.⁴ George Selwyn says, 'Who should *the man of the people* live with, but with *the woman of the people*?' Tonton sends his compliments to Druid, and I am the whole sacred grove's devoted

H. W.

I

¹ Mrs. Clive, the actress.

² The Ladies Waldegrave of Sir Joshua's famous picture.

³ The Duchess of Gloucester.—T.

⁴ Mrs. Mary Robinson, the actress, known as 'Perdita.'

112. *To the Countess of Upper Ossory*

[Aetat 65]

Nov. 5, 1782

I beg your Ladyship's pardon, but I cannot refrain from sending you a codicil to my last. I have taken to astronomy, now the scale is enlarged enough to satisfy my taste, who love gigantic ideas—do not be afraid; I am not going to write a second part to *The Castle of Otranto*, nor another account of the Patagonians who inhabit the new Brobdingnag planet; though I do not believe that a world 160 times bigger than ours is inhabited by pigmies—they would do very well for our page, the moon.

I have been reading Lord Buchan's letter again. He tells me that Mr. What-d'ye-call-him, at Bath, says that the new planet's orbit is eighty of our years. Now, if their days are in proportion to their year, as our days are to our year, a day in the new planet must contain 1920 hours; and yet, I dare to say, some of the inhabitants complain of the shortness of the days. I may err in my calculation for I am a woful arithmetician, and never could learn my multiplication table; but no matter, one large sum is as good as another. How one should smile to hear the Duchess of Devonshire of the new planet cry, 'Lord! you would not go to dinner yet, sure! it is but fifteen hundred o'clock!' or some Miss,—'Ah! that superannuated old fright, I'll lay a wager she's a year old.' But stay; here I don't go by my own rule of proportion, I ought to suppose their lives adequate to their size. Well, any way, one might build very entertaining hypotheses on this new discovery.

The

The planet's distance from the sun is 1,710,000,000 of miles—I revere a telescope's eyes that can see so far! What pity that no Newton should have thought of improving instruments for hearing too! If a glass can penetrate 1,710,000,000 miles beyond the sun, how easy to form a trumpet like Sir Joshua Reynolds's, by which one might overhear what is said in Mercury and Venus, that are within a stone's-throw of us! Well, such things will be discovered—but alas! we live in such an early age of the world, that nothing is brought to any perfection! I don't doubt but there will be invented spying-glasses for seeing the thoughts—and then a new kind of stucco for concealing them; but I return to my new favourite, astronomy. Do but think, Madam, how fortunate it is for us that discoveries are not reciprocal. If our superiors of the great planets were to dabble in such minute researches as we make by microscopes, how with their infinitely greater facilities, they might destroy us for a morning's amusement! They might impale our little globe on a pin's point, as we do a flea, and take the current of the Ganges or Oroonoko for the circulation of our blood—for with all due respect for philosophy of all sorts, I humbly apprehend that when people wade beyond their sphere, they make egregious blunders—at least we do, who are not accustomed to them. I am so vulgar, that when I hear of 17,000,000 of miles, I fancy astronomers compute by livres like the French, and not by pounds sterling—I mean, not by miles sterling. Nay, as it is but two days that I have grown wise, I have another whim. I took it into my head last night that our antediluvian ancestors, who are said to have lived many hundred years, were not inhabitants

inhabitants of this earth but of the new planet, whence might come the account which we believe came from heaven. Whatever came from the skies, where the new planet lives, would, in the apprehension of men at that time, be deemed to come from heaven. Now, if a patriarch lived ten of their years, which may be the term of their existence, and which according to our computation make 800 of our years, he was pretty nearly of the age of Methusalem; for what signifies a fraction of an hundred years or so?—Yet I offer this only as a conjecture; nor will I weary your Ladyship with more, though I am not a little vain of my new speculations.

Apropos to millions, have you heard, Madam, of the Prince de Guéméné's breaking for 28,000,000 of livres? Would not one think it was a debt contracted by the two Foleys? I know of another Prince de Guéméné, who lived, I think, early in the reign of Louis Quatorze, and had a great deal of wit. His wife was a *savante*. One day, he met coming out of her closet an old Jew (not such as the present Prince and the Foleys deal with, but) quite in rags, and half stark. The Prince asked who he was? The Princess replied scornfully, 'Mais il me montre l'hebreu.'—'Eh, bien,' said the Prince, 'et bientôt il vous montera son cul.'—I hope this story, if you did not know it, will make amends for the rest of my rhapsody.

113. *To the Earl of Strafford*

[Aetat 66]

Berkeley Square

Dec. 11, 1783

Your Lordship is so partial to me and my idle letters, that I am afraid of writing them; not lest they should sink below
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the standard you have pleased to affix to them in your own mind, but from fear of being intoxicated into attempting to keep them up to it, which would destroy their only merit, their being written naturally and without pretensions. Gratitude and good breeding compel me to make due answers; but I entreat your Lordship to be assured, that, however vain I am of your favour, my only aim is to preserve the honour of your friendship; that it is all the praise I ask or wish; and that, with regard to letter-writing, I am firmly persuaded that it is a province in which women will always shine superiorly; for our sex is too jealous of the reputation of good sense, to condescend to hazard a thousand trifles and negligences, which give grace, ease, and familiarity to correspondence. I will say no more on that subject, for I feel that I am on the brink of a dissertation, and though that fault would prove the truth of my proposition, I will not punish your Lordship only to convince you that I am in the right.

The winter is not dull or disagreeable: on the contrary, it is pleasing, as the town is occupied on general subjects, and not, as is too common, on private scandal, private vices, and follies. The India Bill, air-balloons, Vestris, and the automaton,¹ share all attention. Mrs. Siddons, as less a novelty, does not engross all conversation. If abuse still keeps above par, it confines itself to its prescriptive province, the ministerial line. In that walk it has tumbled a little into the kennel. The low buffoonery of Lord Thurlow, in laying the caricature of the coalition

¹ A mechanical chess-player made by an Austrian—Wolfgang, Baron von Kempelen (1734-1804).—T.

coalition on the table of your Lordship's House, has levelled it to Sadler's Wells; and Mr. Flood, the pillar of invective, does not promise to re-erect it; not, I conclude, from want of having imported a stock of ingredients, but his presumptuous début on the very night of his entry was so wretched, and delivered in so barbarous a brogue, that I question whether he will ever recover the blow Mr. Courtenay gave him. A young man may correct and improve, and rise from a first fall; but an elderly formed speaker has not an equal chance. Mr. Hamilton, Lord Abercorn's heir, but by no means so laconic, had more success. Though his first essay, it was not at all dashed by bashfulness; and though he might have blushed for discovering so much personal rancour to Mr. Fox, he rather seemed to be impatient to discharge it.

Your Lordship sees in the papers that the two Houses of Ireland have firmly resisted the innovations of the Volunteers. Indeed, it was time for the Protestant proprietors to make their stand; for though the Catholics behave decently, it would be into their hands that the prize would fall. The delegates, it is true, have sent over a most loyal address; but I wish their actions may not contradict their words! Mr. Flood's discomfiture here will, I suppose, carry him back to a field wherein his wicked spirit may have more effect. It is a very serious moment! I am in pain lest your county, my dear Lord (you know what I mean), should countenance such pernicious designs.

I am impatient for next month, for the pleasure of seeing
your

your Lordship and Lady Strafford, and am of both the devoted humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

114. *To the Countess of Upper Ossory*

[Ætæ 66]

Dec. 30, 1783

I am not such a buzzard, Madam, but that I did guess from your Ladyship's silence *and other circumstances*, that my last letter or two were not to your taste. I was, and perhaps shall be, a prophet; but as that is a profession never honoured in its own country (as I can say with truth and a little vanity I have often found), I shall touch on nothing you do not like. I obeyed your silence, lest I should say what you wished me not to say; and now you bid me write again, I am ready to talk nonsense rather than sense, being sure that I have much more talent for the one than the other. News, I know none, but that they are crying peerages about the streets in barrows, and can get none off. Lord Chesterfield¹ is named Ambassador to Spain, to pay off the old debt of sending us Gondomar, and the Foundling Hospital is to be converted into an academy of politicians.

I did mean to pass my holidays at Twickenham, but the weather is so severe I did not venture. I have been so perfectly well since I came to town, that I will not risk another rheumatism.

American

¹ Philip Stanhope (1755-1818), fifth Earl of Chesterfield, cousin and successor of the witty Earl.—T.

American news may now be a *neûtral* article; Washington, *qui, il me semble, tranche un peu du roi*, has instituted a military order, and calls it the order of Cincinnatus, *ce qui tranche un peu du pedant*. He sent it to La Fayette, and it made an uproar in Paris. As the *noblesse* spell only by the ear, they took it for the order of St. Senatus. They had recourse to the calendar, and, finding no such saint in heaven's almanac, they concluded it was a new canonization at Boston, and were enraged that Washington should encroach on the papacy as well as on the diadem. It may offend even the Bishop of Derry, who has renounced all religions to qualify himself for being a cardinal. Lord Edward Fitzgerald told me last night that he fears the Volunteers are very serious: *sans compter* the spirits which the late revolution here may give them—but I had better break off, lest I offend by sliding into politics, which you dislike.

I shall like prodigiously to be teadrunkwith'd by Lady Ossory and the graces, whether they are consubstantial or only coexistent, and shall not regret Mdlle. Heinel, with

Her arms sublime that float upon the air.

You laugh at my distresses, Madam, but it is a very serious thing to have taken an old cook as yellow as a dishclout, and have her seduced by a jolly dog of a coachman, and have her miscarry of a child and go on with a dropsy. All my servants think that the moment they are useless I must not part with them, and so I have an infirmary instead of a *menage*; and those that are good for anything do nothing but get children,

so that my house is a mixture of a county and foundling hospital. I don't wonder at his Majesty, who has packed off the decrepit Earl and the procreative Bishop. Adieu till Thursday.

You accuse me of twenty things that I have no sort of title to, as sense, prudence, entertainment, jollity, and mystery. Who would ever think, Madam, of those being features in my character? It is like your desiring me to write and *promising* me not to say above two words in answer to my letters. Indeed, I shall not write on those terms. I have no more vanity than hypocrisy; and, if you would only substitute *indifference* in the place of all the attributes you have so graciously bestowed on me, you would find it the sole key to almost every action of my life for some time past, and I believe for all to come. With neither love nor hatred, with neither avarice nor ambition, it is very seldom that one grows a hypocrite after being the contrary. If I could be vain or forget myself, your Ladyship's compliments would have that effect; but, as they have not turned my head hitherto, I trust they will not be able, and then I am sure nothing else will, since I can boast and desire to boast of nothing but being yours, &c.

115. *To the Rev. William Mason*

[Ætæt 66]

Berkeley Square

Feb. 2, 1784

I thank you for your condolence on the death of my brother,¹ and on the considerable diminution of my own fortune

¹ Sir Edward Walpole.

tune, though neither are events to which I am not perfectly reconciled. My brother was seventy-seven, had enjoyed perfect health and senses to that age, did not even begin to break till last August, suffered no pain, saw death advance gradually though fast, with the coolest tranquillity, did not even wish to live longer, and died both with indifference and without affectation; is that a termination to lament?

I do lose fourteen hundred a year by his death, but had I reason to expect to keep it so long? I had twice been offered the reversion for my own life, and positively refused to accept it, because I would receive no obligation that might entangle my honour and my gratitude, and set them at variance. I never did ask or receive a personal favour from my most intimate friends when in power, though they were too upright to have laid me under the same difficulties, and have always acted an honest uniform part; but though I love expense, I was content with a fortune far above any merit I can pretend to, and knew I should be content were it much lessened. As it would be contemptible to regret the diminution at sixty-six, there is no merit in being quite easy under the loss. But you do me honour I do not deserve in complimenting me on not loving money. I have always loved what money would purchase, which is much the same thing; and the whole of my philosophy consists in reconciling myself to buying fewer baubles for a year or two that I may live, and when the old child's baby-house is quite full of playthings.

I am surprised that you expected me to take notice of Lord
Harcourt's

Harcourt's turning courtier.¹ It did not astonish me in the least, as I have known for near two years that such an event was by no means improbable, and did myself try to contribute to it when I thought it not at all irreconcilable with his former conduct. Nor do I wonder at your announcing in effect the same of yourself. Were I surprised, I should contradict one of my own maxims which I have scarce or never known to fail, and which is, that men are always most angry with those with whom they quarrel last, which generally produces reconciliations between those whose hatreds agree *in eodem tertio*. But in truth I concern myself with no man's politics but my own; first, because I have no more right to dictate to others, than I will allow anybody to dictate to me; and secondly, because I can see into no heart but my own, nor know its real motives of action. My own point has been to be consistent ever since I first thought on politics, which was five-and-forty years ago, and I feel a satisfaction in having been so steady, because it seems to me if I do not deceive or flatter myself, that it is a proof that I have acted on principle and not from disappointment, resentment, passion, interest, or fickleness.

It made me smile indeed when I heard that Lord Harcourt on his change had given away his ring of Brutus to Lady Jersey's little boy; because I do not see how anything that has happened within this twelve-month has affected the character of Brutus, who died seventeen hundred years before the coalition

¹ Lord Harcourt, who had been a staunch Whig, turned against Fox's India Bill, on which the King offered him the embassy to Spain and made his wife Lady of the Bedchamber to the Queen.

coalition was thought on; I am glad however that if I change I may keep my Caligula without committing treason.

Your distinction of the *crown's friends* is, I own, too theologic a refinement for my simple understanding, who never conceived a confusion of two natures in one person, yet still remaining separate; nor in human affairs should I comprehend why a Pope's disgracing himself as a gentleman by the meanest duplicity should make one fall in love with his tiara. Do you think I should accept for sound reasoning if you were capable of telling me, that though you vowed in a sermon that you would never be a bishop, yet your gown being distinct from you, you could see no reason why your gown might not be turned into lawn sleeves?

What miracles the new set of men that are to arise are to achieve, I neither know nor care; I shall be out of the question before that blessed millennium arrives, unless they are already come, as perhaps they are, and for that too I cannot have long to care; though I firmly believe that your *new set* will only effect what has often been tried before, and what you say *ought* to be tried, i.e. to prove themselves the *crown's friends*—an act of loyalty which I dare to say the wearer will be the first to pardon.

You see by my using the same liberality of correspondence I approve of yours. I am above disguising my sentiments, and am too low for any man to disguise his to me. Mine indeed having no variety in them, must be less entertaining, and therefore, unless I take a freak of hobbling to court, you can have no curiosity to hear them, nor should I have mentioned

tioned them now, but that I thought it respectful to you, and candid when you communicated your *new* sentiments to me, to tell you that mine remained unaltered.

I cannot imagine why you think that I shall not like your tragedy; am I apt to dislike your writings? Though I am too sincere to flatter you when I think you unequal to yourself, I did reckon that I was one who had taste enough to be sensible to the utmost of the beauties of your capital works—and tragedy is certainly not a walk in which I can believe you will miss your way; you have trodden more difficult paths with the happiest facility. I shall be glad to see your piece when you will indulge me with it.

And am yours ever,

HORACE WALPOLE.¹

P. S. Mr. Jerningham has just published a new poem on the doctrines of the Scandinavian bards. It is far superior to his other works. The versification is good; very many expressions and lines beautiful, and the whole nervous and not like his uniform turtle ditties. It might have been thrown into a better plan; and it ends rather abruptly and tamely. He seems to have kept the *Descent of Odin* in his eye, though he had not the art of conjuring up the most forceful feelings, as Gray has done, in a subject in which there is so much of the terrible. Though one has scarce any idea of what the whole is about, yet one is enwrapt by it—as one is delighted with the *Flower and Leaf*, though a mere description of ladies in white velvet

¹ A coolness followed the dispatch of this letter, and all communications between Walpole and Mason ceased until a few months previous to the death of the former.—T.

velvet and green satin set with rubies and emeralds, and holding wands of *agnus castus*.

116. *To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway*

[Aetat 67]

Strawberry Hill

Oct. 15, 1784

As I have heard nothing from you, I flatter myself Lady Aylesbury mends, or I think you would have brought her again to the physicians: you will, I conclude, next week, as towards the end of it the ten days they named will be expired. I must be in town myself about Thursday on some little business of my own.

As I was writing this, my servants called me away to see a balloon; I suppose Blanchard's, that was to be let off from Chelsea this morning. I saw it from the common field before the window of my round tower. It appeared about a third of the size of the moon, or less, when setting, something above the tops of the trees on the level horizon. It was then descending; and, after rising and declining a little, it sunk slowly behind the trees, I should think about or beyond Sunbury, at five minutes after one. But you know I am a very inexact guesser at measures and distances, and may be mistaken in many miles; and you know how little I have attended to those *airgonauts*: only t'other night I diverted myself with a sort of meditation on future *airgonation*, supposing that it will not only be perfected, but will depose navigation. I did not finish it, because I am not skilled, like the gentleman that used to
write

write political ship-news, in that style which I wanted to perfect my essay: but in the prelude I observed how ignorant the ancients were in supposing Icarus melted the wax of his wings by too near access to the sun, whereas he would have been frozen to death before he made the first post on that road. Next, I discovered an alliance between Bishop Wilkins's art of flying and his plan of an universal language; the latter of which he no doubt calculated to prevent the want of an interpreter when he should arrive at the moon.

But I chiefly amused myself with ideas of the change that would be made in the world by the substitution of balloons to ships. I supposed our seaports to become *deserted villages*; and Salisbury Plain, Newmarket Heath (another canvass for alteration of ideas), and all downs (but *the Downs*) arising into dockyards for aerial vessels. Such a field would be ample in furnishing new speculations. But to come to my ship-news:—

‘The good balloon Daedalus, Captain Wing-ate, will fly in a few days for China; he will stop at the top of the Monument to take in passengers.

‘Arrived on Brand Sands, the Vulture, Captain Nabob; the Tortoise snow, from Lapland; the Pet-en-l’air, from Versailles; the Dreadnought, from Mount Etna, Sir W. Hamilton, commander; the Tympany, Montgolfier; and the Mine-A-in-a-bandbox, from the Cape of Good Hope. Foundered in a hurricane, the Bird of Paradise, from Mount Ararat. The Bubble, Sheldon, took fire, and was burnt to her gallery; and the Phoenix is to be cut down to a second-rate.’

In those days Old Sarum will again be a town and have houses in it. There will be fights in the air with wind-guns and bows and arrows; and there will be prodigious increase of land for tillage, especially in France, by breaking up all public roads as useless. But enough of my fooleries; for which I am sorry you must pay double postage.

117. To Miss Hannah More¹

[Aetat 67]

Strawberry Hill

Nov. 13, 1784

Thank you a thousand times, dear Madam, for your obliging letter and the new *Bristol stones* you have sent me, which would pass on a more skilful lapidary than I am for having been brillianced by a professed artist, if you had not told me that they came shining out of a native mine, and had no foreign diamond-dust to polish them. Indeed, can one doubt any longer that Bristol is as rich and warm a soil as India? I am convinced it has been so of late years, though I question its having been so luxuriant in Alderman Canning's days; and I have MORE reasons for thinking so, than from the marvels of Chatterton.—But I will drop metaphors, lest some nabob should take me *au pied de la lettre*, fit out an expedition, plunder

¹ Hannah More (1745-1833), religious writer and philanthropist, at this time well known in London literary circles which she described in her poem *Bas Bleu*. Her acquaintance with Walpole began in 1781. He invited her to Strawberry Hill and printed her poem *Bonner's Ghost* at the Strawberry Hill Press. She was a frequent correspondent of his later years. Before his death she had in large measure withdrawn from London society, but at this period much of her time was spent with Mrs. Garrick, either in London or at her country house at Hampton.—T.

plunder your city, and massacre you for weighing *too many* carats.

Seriously, Madam, I am surprised—and chiefly at the kind of genius of this unhappy female.¹ Her ear, as you remark, is perfect; but that, being a gift of nature, amazes me less. Her expressions are more exalted than poetic; and discover taste, as you say, rather than discover flights of fancy and wild ideas, as one should expect. I should therefore advise her quitting blank verse, which wants the highest colouring to distinguish it from prose; whereas her taste, and probably good sense, might give sufficient beauty to her rhymes. Her not being learned is another reason against her writing in blank verse. Milton employed all his reading, nay, all his geographic knowledge, to enrich his language, and succeeded. They who have imitated him in that particular have been mere monkeys; and they who neglected it flat and poor.

Were I not persuaded by the samples you have sent me, Madam, that this woman has talents, I should not advise her encouraging her propensity, lest it should divert her from the care of her family, and, after the novelty is over, leave her worse than she was. When the late Queen patronized Stephen Duck,² who was only a wonder at first, and had not genius enough to support the character he had promised, twenty artisans

¹ Mrs. Anne Yearsley (1756-1806), the 'Bristol milkwoman.' Mrs. Yearsley's poetical talents were brought to Hannah More's notice by her cook. She helped the milkwoman to publish her poems by subscription, and collected a sum of money for her which was invested in the names of trustees—Hannah More and Mrs. Montagu. Mrs. Yearsley objected to this arrangement, and quarrelled with Hannah More. In later life she kept a circulating library at Bristol, and wrote a tragedy, *Earl Godwin*, which was acted at Bristol and Bath.—T.

² The thresher-poet. Queen Caroline made him keeper of her library at Richmond. He took orders in 1746, and committed suicide in a fit of dejection in 1756.—T.

artisans and labourers turned poets, and starved. Your poetess can scarce be more miserable than she is, and even the reputation of being an authoress may procure her customers: but as poetry is one of your least excellences, Madam (your virtues will forgive me), I am sure you will not only give her counsels for her works, but for her conduct; and your gentleness will blend them so judiciously, that she will mind the friend as well as the mistress. She must remember that she is a Lactilla, not a Pastora; and is to tend real cows, not Arcadian sheep.

What if I should go a step farther, dear Madam, and take the liberty of reproving you for putting into this poor woman's hands such a frantic thing as *The Castle of Otranto*? It was fit for nothing but the age in which it was written; an age in which much was known; that required only to be amused, nor cared whether its amusements were conformable to truth and the models of good sense; that could not be spoiled; was in no danger of being too credulous; and rather wanted to be brought back to imagination, than to be led astray by it:—but you will have made a hurly-burly in this poor woman's head, which it cannot develop and digest.

I will not reprove without suggesting something in my turn. Give her Dryden's *Cock and Fox*, the standard of good sense, poetry, nature, and ease. I would recommend others of his tales: but her imagination is already too gloomy, and should be enlivened; for which reason I do not name Mr. Gray's *Eton Ode* and *Churchyard*. Prior's *Solomon* (for I doubt his *Alma*, though far superior, is too learned for her limited reading

reading) would be very proper. In truth, I think the cast of the age (I mean in its compositions) is too sombre. The flimsy giantry of Ossian has introduced mountainous horrors. The exhibitions at Somerset House are crowded with Brobdingnag ghosts. Read and explain to her a charming poetic familiarity called the *Bluestocking Club*. If she has not your other pieces, might I take the liberty, Madam, of begging you to buy them for her, and let me be in your debt? And that your lessons may win their way more easily, even though her heart be good, will you add a guinea or two, as you see proper? And though I do not love to be named, yet, if it would encourage a subscription, I should have no scruple. It will be best to begin moderately; for, if she should take Hippocrene for Pactolus, we may hasten her ruin, not contribute to her fortune.

On recollection, you had better call me Mr. Anybody, than name my name, which I fear is in bad odour at Bristol, on poor Chatterton's account; and it may be thought that I am atoning his ghost: though, if his friends would show my letters to him, you would find that I was as tender to him as to your milkwoman: but *that* they have never done, among other instances of their injustice. However, I beg you to say nothing on that subject, as I have declared I would not.

I have seen our excellent friend in Clarges Street;¹ she complains as usual of her deafness; but I assure you it is at least not worse, nor is her weakness. Indeed I think both her and Mr. Vesey better than last winter. When will you *blue-*

stocking

¹ Mrs. Vesey.

stocking yourself and come amongst us? Consider how many of us are veterans; and, though we do not trudge on foot according to the institution, we may be out at heels—and the heel, you know, Madam, has never been privileged.

I am, with the sincerest regard, Madam,

Your much obliged and obedient humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

118. *To Miss Hannah More*

[Aetat 67]

Berkeley Square

April 5, 1785

Had I not heard part of your conversation with Mrs. Carter¹ the other night, Madam, I should certainly not have discovered the authoress of the very ingenious anticipation of our future jargon.² How should I? I am not fortunate enough to know all your talents; nay, I question whether you yourself suspect all you possess. Your *Bas Bleu* is in a style very different from any of your other productions that I have seen; and this letter, which shows your intuition into the degeneracy of our language, has a vein of humour and satire that could not be calculated from your *Bas Bleu*, in which good nature and good humour had made a great deal of learning wear all the ease of

¹ Mrs. Elizabeth Carter (1717-1806), poet and translator of Epictetus. She had been a friend of Johnson, and a contributor to *The Rambler*. In her remarks on the 'blue-stocking set,' of which Mrs. Carter was a well-known member, Lady Louisa Stuart writes of her as one 'upon whom the sound scholarship of a learned man sate, as it does upon a man, easily and quietly, and who was no more vain of being a profound Grecian than an ordinary woman of knowing how to spell.'—T.

² Hannah More sent to Horace Walpole an anonymous letter, written to ridicule the adoption of French idioms into the English language by the fashionable people of the day. (*Works of Lord Orford*, vol v. p. 582.)—T.

of familiarity. I did wish you to write another *Percy*, but I beg now that you will first produce a specimen of *all* the various manners in which you can shine; for, since you are as modest as if your issue were illegitimate, I don't know but, like some females really in fault, you would stifle some of your pretty infants, rather than be detected and blush.

In the meantime, I beseech you not only to print your *specimen of the language that is to be in fashion*, but have it entered at Stationers' Hall; or depend upon it, if ever a copy falls into the hands of a fine gentleman yet unborn, who shall be able both to read and write, he will adopt your letter for his own, and the *galimatias* will give the *ton* to the court, as Euphues did near two hundred years ago; and then you will have corrupted our language instead of defending it: and surely it is not *your* interest, Madam, to have pure English grow obsolete.

If you do not promise to grant my request, I will show your letter everywhere to those that are worthy of seeing it; that is, indeed, in very few places; for you *shall* have the honour of it. It is one of those compositions that prove themselves standards, by begetting imitations; and if the genuine parent is unknown, it will be ascribed to everybody that is supposed (in his own set) to have more wit than the rest of the world. I should be diverted, I own, to hear it faintly disavowed by some who would wish to pass for its authors: but still there is more pleasure in doing justice to merit, than in drawing vain pretensions into a scrape; and therefore I think you and I had better be honest and acknowledge it, though to
you

you (for I am out of the question, but as evidence) it will be painful; for though the proverb says, 'Tell truth and shame the devil,' I believe he is never half so much confounded as a certain amiable young gentlewoman, who is discovered to have more taste and abilities than she ever ventured to ascribe to herself even in the most private dialogues with her own heart, especially when that native friend is so pure as to have no occasion to make allowances even for self-love. For my part, I am most seriously obliged to you, Madam, for so agreeable and kind a communication, and am, with sincere regard,

Your most grateful and obedient humble servant,

HOR. WALPOLE.

119. *To the Countess of Upper Ossory*

[Aetat 67]

Strawberry Hill

June 20, 1785

I give your Ladyship a thousand thanks for the crown of laurel you sent me: I tried it on immediately; but it certainly was never made for me; it was a vast deal too big, and did not fit me at all; it must have been designed for one of double my size. Besides, as I never wear so much as a hat, it would make my head ache—and then, too, as nobody in the village has worn a sprig of laurel since Mr. Pope's death, good Lord! how my neighbours would stare, if I should appear with a chaplet, to which I have no more title than Lord de Ferrers

to

to the earldom of Leicester. I will not be such a bear as to send back your Ladyship's favour: but if you would give me leave to present it to poor Mr. Hayley, or Mr. Cumberland, who ruin themselves in new laurels every day, it would make them as happy as princes; and I dare answer that either of them would write an ode upon you, not quite so good perhaps, yet within a hundred thousand degrees as excellent as Major Scott's, and at least better than Mr. Warton's. However, though I am no poet, yet I don't know what I may come to, if I live. I have just written the life of a young lady in verse; in which, perhaps, I have too much affected brevity, though had I chosen to spin it out by a number of proper names, more falsehoods, and a tolerable quantity of anachronisms, there was matter enough to have furnished as many volumes as Miss Bellamy's Memoirs. Mine I have comprised in these four lines:—

Patty was a pretty maid;
Patty was of men afraid;
Patty grew her fears to lose,
And grew so brave, she lost her nose.

As the world is now so overstocked with anecdotes, I don't know whether it will not be advisable for future English biographers to aim at my conciseness, and confine themselves to quatrains. Dr. Johnson's history, though he is going to have as many lives as a cat, might be reduced to four lines; but I shall wait, to extract the quintessence, till Sir John Hawkins,
Madam

Madam Piozzi,¹ and Mr. Boswell have produced their quartos. Apropos, Madam, t'other night I was sitting with Mrs. Vesey; there was very little light; arrived Sir Joshua Reynolds, and a person whom I took for Mr. Boswell. I sewed up my mouth, and, though he addressed me two or three times, I answered nothing but yes or no. Just as he was going away, I found out that it was Mr. Richard Burke,² and endeavoured to repair my causticity. I am not quite in charity with Sir Joshua; he desired to come and see my marvellous Henry VII; when he saw it, he said, 'It is in the old hard Flemish manner.' For hard, it is so bold, that it is one of the great reasons for doubting its antiquity; and for Flemish, there is nothing Flemish in it, except a *chiaroscuro*, as masterly as Rubens's; but it is not surprising that Sir Joshua should dislike colouring that has lasted so long!

I went last week to see a new piece, by O'Keeffe, my favourite author, next to Major Scott. Harry Fox was in the box. I asked him if he had ever seen *The Agreeable Surprise*; he said, No; I cried it up to the heavens. He was much surprised at *The Beggar on Horseback*, and asked me if *The Beggar on Horseback* was like *The Agreeable Surprise*. The new piece is very low, to be sure, and yet it diverted me; but you know I like extremes, and next to perfect wit, perfect nonsense, when it is original. A sort of folly I do not admire is air-balloons; but I believe their reign is over. They say Monsieur Pilatrier

¹ Née Hester Lynch Salusbury; b. 1741; m. 1. (1763) Henry Thrale, a rich brewer; 2. (1784) Gabriel Piozzi, an Italian musician. She is chiefly known from her friendship with Dr. Johnson, which, however, came to an end after her second marriage. She published *Anecdotes of Dr. Johnson* in 1786, and *Letters to and from Dr. Johnson* in 1788. She died in 1821.—T.

² Brother or son of the statesman.—T.

Pilatrier¹ and another man have been burnt to cinders, and Mr. Sadler has not been heard of yet.

The old, mad, drunken Duke of Norfolk is going to be married again to a Miss Eld, who is forty years old and a Protestant.

Tuesday

I could not finish my letter yesterday, for Lord Sandwich, who was to breakfast with me, arrived sooner than I expected. He brought Mr. Noble with him, the author of the *History of the Cromwells*, and Mr. Selwyn came to dinner with us, and the latter stayed all night. Lord Sandwich has taken the patronage of Mr. Noble (as Hinchinbrook was the residence of Oliver), and the second edition will be much more accurate and curious than the first. I could but look with admiration at the Earl, who at our age can enter so warmly into any pursuits and find them amusing! It is pleasant to have such spirits, that, after going through such busy political scenes, he can be diverted with carrying a white wand at Handel's jubilee,² and for two years together! Do you think Lord Lansdowne would be content with being master of the ceremonies at Bath? The papers tell a different story from mine of poor Pilatrier's exit. I hope it will prevent Mr. Fitzpatrick from such an expedition

¹ Jean François Pilatre de Rozier (1756-1785), a well-known French aeronaut. On June 15, 1785, he ascended from Boulogne in a defective balloon, which burst almost at once. Pilatre and his companion fell to the ground from a considerable height, and were killed on the spot.—T.

² The Handel Commemoration, held in Westminster Abbey on June 3 and 6, 1785.—T.

expedition. It would be silly to break one's neck in going no whither; don't you think so, Madam?

120. *To John Pinkerton*¹

[Aetat 67]

June 26, 1785

I have sent your book to Mr. Colman, Sir, and must desire you in return to offer my grateful thanks to Mr. Knight, who has done me an honour, to which I do not know how I am entitled, by the present of his poetry, which is very classic, and beautiful, and tender, and of chaste simplicity.

To *your* book, Sir, I am much obliged on many accounts; particularly for having recalled my mind to subjects of delight, to which it was grown dulled by age and indolence. In consequence of your reclaiming it, I asked myself whence you feel so much disregard for certain authors whose fame is established: you have assigned good reasons for withholding your approbation from some, on the plea of their being imitators: it was natural, then, to ask myself again, whence they had obtained so much celebrity. I think I have discovered a cause, which I do not remember to have seen noted; and *that* cause I suspect to have been, that certain of those authors possessed grace—do not take me for a disciple of Lord Chesterfield, nor imagine that I mean to erect grace into a capital ingredient of writing, but I do believe that it is a perfume that will preserve

¹ John Pinkerton (1758-1826), antiquary and historian. Pinkerton frequently visited Strawberry Hill. After Walpole's death Pinkerton published *Walpoliana* (2 vols. 12 mo.), containing notes of Walpole's conversation, letters addressed by him to Pinkerton, and remarks on Walpole's habits and character.—T.

serve from putrefaction, and is distinct even from style, which regards expression. Grace, I think, belongs to *manner*. It is from the charm of grace that I believe some authors, not in your favour, obtained part of their renown; Virgil, in particular: and yet I am far from disagreeing with you on his subject in general. There is such a dearth of invention in the *Æneid* (and when he did invent, it was often so foolishly), so little good sense, so little variety, and so little power over the passions, that I have frequently said, from contempt for his matter, and from the charm of his harmony, that I believe I should like his poem better, if I was to hear it repeated, and did not understand Latin. On the other hand, he has more than harmony: whatever he utters is said gracefully, and he ennobles his images, especially in the *Georgics*; or, at least, it is more sensible there, from the humility of the subject. A Roman farmer might not understand his diction in agriculture; but he made a Roman courtier understand farming, the farming of that age, and could captivate a Lord of Augustus's Bedchamber, and tempt him to listen to themes of rusticity. On the contrary, Statius and Claudian, though talking of war, would make a soldier despise them as bullies. That graceful manner of thinking in Virgil seems to me to be more than style, if I do not refine too much: and I admire, I confess, Mr. Addison's phrase, that Virgil 'tossed about his dung with an air of majesty.' A style may be excellent without grace: for instance, Dr. Swift's. Eloquence may bestow an immortal style, and one of more dignity; yet eloquence may want that ease, that genteel air that flows from or constitutes grace. Addison him-
self

self was master of that grace, even in his pieces of humour, and which do not owe their merit to style; and from that combined secret he excels all men that ever lived, but Shakespeare, in humour, by never dropping into an approach towards burlesque and buffoonery, when even his humour descended to characters that in other hands would have been vulgarly low. Is not it clear that Will Wimble was a gentleman, though he always lived at a distance from good company? Fielding had as much humour, perhaps, as Addison; but, having no idea of grace, is perpetually disgusting. His innkeepers and parsons are the grossest of their profession; and his gentlemen are awkward when they should be at their ease.

The Grecians had grace in everything; in poetry, in oratory, in statuary, in architecture, and probably, in music and painting. The Romans, it is true, were their imitators; but, having grace too, imparted it to their copies, which gave them a merit that almost raises them to the rank of originals. Horace's odes acquired their fame, no doubt, from the graces of his manner and purity of his style—the chief praise of Tibullus and Propertius, who certainly cannot boast of more meaning than Horace's odes.

Waller, whom you proscribe, Sir, owed his reputation to the graces of his manner, though he frequently stumbled, and even fell flat; but a few of his smaller pieces are as graceful as possible; one might say that he excelled in painting ladies in enamel, but could not succeed in portraits in oil, large as life. Milton had such superior merit, that I will only say, that if his angels, his Satan, and his Adam have as much dignity as
the

the Apollo Belvidere, his Eve has all the delicacy and graces of the Venus of Medicis; as his description of Eden has the colouring of Albano. Milton's tenderness imprints ideas as graceful as Guido's Madonnas: and the *Allegro*, *Penseroso*, and *Comus* might be denominated from the Three Graces; as the Italians gave similar titles to two or three of Petrarch's best sonnets.

Cowley, I think, would have had grace (for his mind was graceful) if he had had any ear, or if his taste had not been vitiated by the pursuit of wit; which, when it does not offer itself naturally, degenerates into tinsel or pertness. Pertness is the mistaken affectation of grace, as pedantry produces erroneous dignity; the familiarity of the one, and the clumsiness of the other, distort or prevent grace. Nature, that furnishes samples of all qualities, and on the scale of gradation exhibits all possible shades, affords us types that are more apposite than words. The eagle is sublime, the lion majestic, the swan graceful, the monkey pert, the bear ridiculously awkward. I mention these as more expressive and comprehensive than I could make definitions of my meaning; but I will apply the swan only, under whose wings I will shelter an apology for Racine, whose pieces give me an idea of that bird. The colouring of the swan is pure; his attitudes are graceful; he never displeases you when sailing on his proper element. His feet may be ugly, his notes hissing, not musical, his walk not natural; he can soar, but it is with difficulty: still, the impression the swan leaves is that of grace. So does Racine.

Boileau may be compared to the dog, whose sagacity is remarkable

markable, as well as its fawning on its master, and its snarling at those it dislikes. If Boileau was too austere to admit the pliability of grace, he compensates by good sense and propriety. He is like (for I will drop animals) an upright magistrate, whom you respect, but whose justice and severity leave an awe that discourages familiarity. His copies of the ancients may be too servile: but, if a good translator deserves praise, Boileau deserves more: he certainly does not fall below his originals; and, considering at what period he wrote, has greater merit still. By his imitations he held out to his countrymen models of taste, and banished totally the bad taste of his predecessors. For his *Lutrin*, replete with excellent poetry, wit, humour, and satire, he certainly was not obliged to the ancients. Excepting Horace, how little idea had either Greeks or Romans of wit and humour! Aristophanes and Lucian, compared with moderns, were, the one a blackguard, and the other a buffoon. In my eyes, the *Lutrin*, *The Dispensary*, and the *Rape of the Lock*, are standards of grace and elegance not to be paralleled by antiquity; and eternal reproaches to Voltaire, whose indelicacy in the *Pucelle* degraded him as much, when compared with the three authors I have named, as his *Henriade* leaves Virgil, and even Lucian, whom he more resembles, by far his superiors.

The *Dunciad* is blemished by the offensive images of the games; but the poetry appears to me admirable; and, though the fourth book has obscurities, I prefer it to the three others: it has descriptions not surpassed by any poet that ever existed, and which surely a writer merely ingenious will never equal.

The

The lines on Italy, on Venice, on convents, have all the grace for which I contend as distinct from poetry, though united with the most beautiful; and the *Rape of the Lock*, besides the originality of great part of the invention, is a standard of graceful writing.

In general, I believe that what I call grace is denominated elegance; but by grace I mean something higher: I will explain myself by instances—Apollo is graceful, Mercury elegant: Petrarch, perhaps, owed his whole merit to the harmony of his numbers and the graces of his style. They conceal his poverty of meaning and want of variety. His complaints, too, may have added an interest which, had his passion been successful, and had expressed itself with equal sameness, would have made the number of his sonnets insupportable. Melancholy in poetry, I am inclined to think, contributes to grace, when it is not disgraced by pitiful lamentations, such as Ovid's and Cicerò's in their banishments. We respect melancholy, because it imparts a similar affection, pity. A gay writer, who should only express satisfaction without variety, would soon be nauseous.

Madame de Sévigné shines both in grief and gaiety. There is too much of sorrow for her daughter's absence; yet it is always expressed by new terms, by new images, and often by wit, whose tenderness has a melancholy air. When she forgets her concern, and returns to her natural disposition, gaiety, every paragraph has novelty: her allusions, her applications are the happiest possible. She has the art of making you acquainted with all her acquaintance, and attaches you even to
the

the spots she inhabited. Her language is correct, though unstudied; and, when her mind is full of any great event, she interests you with the warmth of a dramatic writer, not with the chilling impartiality of an historian. Pray read her accounts of the death of Turenne, and of the arrival of King James in France, and tell me whether you do not know their persons as if you had lived at the time.

For my part, if you will allow me a word of digression (not that I have written with any method), I hate the cold impartiality recommended to historians: (*Si vis me flere, dolendum est primum ipsi tibi*): but, that I may not wander again, nor tire, nor contradict you any more, I will finish now, and shall be glad if you will dine at Strawberry Hill next Sunday, and take a bed there, when I will tell you how many more parts of your book have pleased me, than have startled my opinions, or, perhaps, prejudices. I have the honour to be, Sir, with regard, &c.

121. *To the Countess of Upper Ossory*

[Aetat 67]

Strawberry Hill

Monday night, July 4, 1785

I write again so quickly, Madam, not to detain Mr. Fitzpatrick's letter, for which I give you many thanks, and which you must value as it is so very sensible and unaffected an account of his aerial jaunt, and deserves to be preserved in your Milesian archives; for, whether aerostation becomes a professional art, or is given up with the prosecution of the Tower of

of

of Babel and other invasions on the coast of Heaven, an original letter under the hand of the first *airgonauts* will always be a precious curiosity.

I have just been reading a work by a new noble authoress, a princess of the blood of Clarence, and a lady deeply versed in the antiquities of the country where the great Brian Mac Gill Patrick was seated, as well as of the Phœnicians, Egyptians, Gauls, &c. It is the present Countess of Moira, whose letter to her son is in the new seventh volume of the *Archæologia*, and gives an account of a skeleton and its habiliments lately discovered in the county of Down and barony of Linalearty.

Oh, but I have better news for you, Madam, if you have any patriotism as a citizen of this world and wish its longevity. Mr. Herschel has found out that our globe is a comely middle-aged personage, and has not so many wrinkles as seven stars, who are evidently our seniors. Nay, he has discovered that the Milky Way is not only a mob of stars, but that there is another dairy of them still farther off, whence I conclude comets are nothing but pails returning from milking, instead of balloons filled with inflammable air, which must by this time have made terrible havoc in such thickets of worlds, if at all dangerous; now I shall descend, as if out of a balloon, from the heavens to the milkwoman.¹ It is no doubt extraordinary that the poor soul should write tolerably; but, when she can write tolerably, is not it extraordinary that a Miss Seward

¹ Anne Yearsley.

Seward¹ should write no better?" I am sick of these sweet singers, and advised that when poor Mrs. Yearsley shall have been set at her ease by the subscription, she should drive her cows from the foot of Parnassus and hum no more ditties. For Chatterton, he was a gigantic genius, and might have soared I know not whither. In the poems avowed for his is a line that Rowley nor all the monks in Christendom could or would have written, and which would startle them all for its depth of thought and comprehensive expression from a lad of eighteen—

Reason, a thorn in Revelation's side!

I will read no more of Rousseau; his *Confessions* disgusted me beyond any book I ever opened. His hen, the schoolmistress, Madame de Genlis, the newspapers say, is arrived in London. I nauseate her too; the eggs of education that both he and she laid could not be hatched till the chickens would be ready to die of old age. I revere genius; I have a dear friendship for common sense; I have a partiality for professed nonsense; but I abhor extravagance, that is given for the quintessence of sense, and affectation that pretends to be philosophy. Good night, Madam!

P. S. Pray tell me where your new library is placed. The parson of Teddington and his wife were robbed, at half an hour after nine last night, by three footpads, with pistols, at my back gate. My housekeeper heard the bustle from her room that is over the Holbein chamber. I was in the library,
but

¹ Anna Seward, 'the Swan of Litchfield,' She was perhaps the most aggressive of the poetesses of the time, but her letters are still readable.

but knew nothing of the matter till to-day. It is agreeable to have banditti at one's doors!

122. *To the Countess of Upper Ossory*

[Ætæt 67]

Aug. 29, 1785

It is flattering, and too flattering to me, Madam, to be supposed the author of the *Letters on Literature*.¹ The writer has much more variety of knowledge, and of useful knowledge, and a sounder understanding than I have; though I do not think that even thirty years ago I should have written so rashly as he has done, nor so fantastically. Far was it ever from my thoughts to admire Dr. Akenside (and to commend him in a work that excommunicates imitators!) or to depreciate Boileau, or not to think Molière a genius of the first water. Who upon earth has written such perfect comedies? for *The Careless Husband* is but one—*The Nonjuror* was built on *The Tartuffe*; and if *The Man of Mode*² and Vanbrugh are excellent, they are too indelicate—and Congreve, who beats all for wit, is not always natural; still less, simple. In fact I disagree with Mr. Heron, as often as I subscribe to him; and though I am an enthusiast to original genius, I cannot forget that there are two classes of authors to be venerated; they who invent, and they who perfect: who has been so original as to exclude improvements?

Well

¹ By Pinkerton, who signed the book 'Robert Heron.'

² *The Careless Husband* and *The Nonjuror* are by Colley Cibber; *The Man of Mode* is by Etherege.—T.

Well, Madam, but I not only am not the author of the *Letters*, but, *upon my veracity*, I never saw a line of them, nor knew such a work was in embryo, till it was left at my house in full impression.

Should a doubt remain with any man (your Ladyship I flatter myself will not question my truth) I will give him an irrecusable proof of my not having had a hand in these *Letters*, if he will have patience to wait for it; and that is, that the author will write better than he has done twenty years after I shall be underground. In short, it is a capacity that will improve by maturity, for it will be corrected by opponents; if it is not hardened into the defence of paradoxes by defending them too ingeniously; as was the misfortune of Rousseau, who might have excelled by writing good sense, but found that there was a shorter path to celebrity by climbing the precipice of absurdity.

I cannot make the same excuse for the pious editors of Dr. Johnson's *Prayers*: see what it is to have friends too honest! How could men be such idiots as to execute such a trust? One laughs at every page, and then the tears come into one's eyes when one learns what the poor being suffered, who even suspected his own madness! One seems to be reading the diary of an old almswoman; and, in fact, his religion was not a step higher in its kind. Johnson had all the bigotry of a monk, and all the folly and ignorance too. He sets himself penances of reading two hundred verses of the Bible per day; proposes to learn high Dutch and Italian at past sixty, and at near seventy *begins* to think of examining the proofs (p. 160) of that religion

religion which he had believed so implicitly. So anile was his faith, that on a fast-day he reproaches himself with putting a little milk into his coffee inadvertently! Can one check a smile when, in his old age, one might say his dotage, he tried to read Vossius on baptism?—No wonder he could only *try*!—but one laughs out, when about a dozen years before his death, he confesses he had never yet read the Apocrypha, though when a boy he had heard the story of Bel and the Dragon. I wonder he did not add, and of Jack the Giant-killer—for such blind faith might easily have confounded the impressions of his first childhood, which lasted uninterrupted to his second.

Methinks the specimen, and Rousseau's *Confessions*, should be lessons against keeping journals, which poor Johnson thought such an excellent nostrum for a good life. How foolish might we all appear, if we registered every delirium! Johnson certainly had strong sense at intervals—of how little use was it to himself!—but what drivellers are his disciples, who think they honour him by laying open his every weakness!

If the Cardinal de Rohan has any biographers, or *sincere friends*, the narrative will be very different. He is in the Bastille for forging the Queen's signature to obtain a collar of diamonds: it is supposed for a present to some woman, for his Eminence is very gallant. He is out of luck; he might not have been sent to Newgate here for using the Queen's name to get diamonds.¹

Lady

¹ An allusion to the Queen's acceptance of some diamonds from Warren Hastings.—T.

Lady Waldegrave, I flatter myself, is very well, Madam: she is at Navestock.

123. *To the Countess of Upper Ossory*

[Aetat 68]

Berkeley Square

Friday night, Jan. 27, 1786

As the first part entertained your Lady and Lordship, it is but a sort of duty to send you the second. I received a little Italian note from Mrs. Cosway, this morning, to tell me that as I had last week met at her house an old acquaintance, without knowing her, I might meet her again this evening, *en connoissance de cause*, as Mademoiselle la Chevalière D'Éon,¹ who, as Mrs. Cosway told me, had taken it ill that I had not reconnoitred her, and said she must be strangely altered—the devil is in it, if she is not!—but, alack, I have found her altered again; adieu to the abbatial dignity that I had fancied I discovered; I now found her loud, noisy, and vulgar; in truth, I believe she had dined a little *en dragon*. The night was hot, she had no muff or gloves, and her hands and arms seem not to have participated of the change of sexes, but are fitter to carry a chair than a fan. I am comforted, too, about her accent. I asked Monsieur Barthélemy, the French Secretary, who was present, whether it was Parisian and good French: he assured me so far from it, that the first time he met her he had been surprised at its being so bad, and that her accent is strong Burgundian. You ask me, Madam, why she

is

¹ At this time D'Éon was wearing woman's clothes.

is here. She says, *pour ses petites affaires*; I take for granted for the same reason that Francis was here two years before he was known.

Nor was this all my entertainment this evening. As Mademoiselle Common of Two's reserve is a little subsided, there were other persons present, as three foreign ministers besides Barthélemy, Lord Carmarthen, Count Oginski, Wilkes and his daughter, and the chief of the Moravians. I could not help thinking how posterity would wish to have been in my situation, at once with three such historic personages as D'Éon, Wilkes, and Oginski, who had so great a share in the revolution of Poland, and was king of it for four-and-twenty hours. He is a noble figure, very like the Duke of Northumberland in the face, but stouter and better proportioned.

I remember many years ago making the same kind of reflection. I was standing at my window after dinner, in summer, in Arlington Street, and saw *Patty Blount*¹ (after Pope's death), with nothing remaining of her immortal charms but her *blue eyes*, trudging on foot with her petticoats pinned up, for it rained, to visit *blameless Bethel*,² who was sick at the end of the street.

Early in the evening I had been, according to your Ladyship's leave, to wait on Lady Ravensworth. Her cough is very frequent, but it seems entirely from her throat, and not in the least from her breast.

After treating your Ladyship with some of the *dramatis personæ*

¹ Martha Blount (1690-1762), the intimate friend of Pope.

² Hugh Bethel, of Rise, Yorkshire, was an intimate friend of Pope, who addressed to him the *Imitation of the Second Satire of the Second Book of Horace*.

personæ of modern story, I beg leave to enclose a Venus of the present hour in her *purus non naturalibus*. The drawing was made by a young lady at Bath, and was given to me by my sister. It diverted me so much that I gave it to Kirgate, with leave to have it engraved for his own benefit, and I should think he would sell hundreds of them.

Miss Hannah More, I see, has advertised her *Bas Bleus*, which I think you will like. I don't know what her *Florio*¹ is. Mrs. *Frail Piozzi's* first volume of *Johnsoniana* is in the press, and will be published in February. There is published another kind of *Ana* called *Silva*, by a Dr. Heathcote, on which I advise your Ladyship not to throw away five shillings as I did—yet I could not read half a crown's worth; it is a heap of dull commonplace.

124. To Sir Horace Mann

[Aetat 68]

Berkeley Square

April 30, 1786

The almanac tells me that I ought to write to you; but then it ought to tell me what to say. I know nothing: people have been out of town for Easter, or rather for Newmarket; for our diversions mark the seasons, instead of their proclaiming themselves. We have no more spring than we had last year. I believe the milkmaids to-morrow will be forced to dress their garlands with Christmas nose-gays of holly and ivy, for want of flowers.

The

¹ A poem, dedicated to Walpole.

The tragedy, or rather, I suppose, the farce of Mr. Hastings's trial is also to commence to-morrow, when he is to make his defence before the House of Commons; where the majority of his judges are *ready* to be astonished at his eloquence, and the transparency of his innocence, and the lustre of his merit. In the meantime, the charges are enormous, and make numbers, who are not to be his jury, marvel how he will clear himself of half; and, if he does, what he will do with the remainder. I have not yet looked into the charge, which fills a thick octavo. My opinion is formed more summarily: innocence does not pave its way with diamonds, nor has a quarry of them on his estate.

All conversation turns on a trio of culprits—Hastings, Fitzgerald,¹ and the Cardinal of Rohan.² I have heard so much of all lately, that I confound them, and am not sure whether it was not the first who pretended to buy a brilliant necklace for the *Queen*, or who committed murders in Ireland, not in India; or whether it was not Fitzgerald who did not deal with Cagliostro for the secret of raising the dead, as he may have occasion for it soon. So much for tragedy! Our comic performers are Boswell and Dame Piozzi. The cock-biographer has fixed a direct lie on the hen, by an advertisement in which he affirms that he communicated his manuscript to Madame Thrale, and that she made no objection to what he says of her low opinion of Mrs. Montagu's book. It is very possible

¹ George Robert Fitzgerald, son of George Fitzgerald by Lady Mary Hervey, daughter of Walpole's friend and correspondent. He was hanged for murder in June 1786.—T.

² The Cardinal was the dupe of Cagliostro and other clever criminals in stealing a valuable diamond necklace from the court jeweller of France. He was acquitted, but suffered temporary banishment.

possible that it might not be her real opinion, but was uttered in compliment to Johnson, or for fear he should spit in her face if she disagreed with him; but how will she get over her not objecting to the passage remaining? She must have known, by knowing Boswell, and by having a similar intention herself, that his anecdotes would certainly be published;—in short, the ridiculous woman will be strangely disappointed. As she must have heard that the whole first impression of her book was sold the first day, no doubt she expects, on her landing, to be received like the Governor of Gibraltar, and to find the road strewed with branches of palm. Alack, she will discover that, though she has ridden an ass, she will be welcomed with no hosannas. She, and Boswell, and their hero, are the joke of the public. A Dr. Wolcot, *soi-disant*, Peter Pindar, has published a burlesque eclogue, in which Boswell and the signora are the interlocutors, and all the absurdest passages in the works of both are ridiculed. The printshops teem with satiric prints on them; one, in which Boswell, as a monkey, is riding on Johnson, the bear, has this witty inscription, ‘My friend *delineavit!*’—But enough of these mountebanks!

The Duchess of Gloucester tells me that Lord Cowper is at Milan, on his way to England; yet, I shall not wonder if he still turns back. I remember Lady Orford came even to Calais, and returned *sur ses pas*.

May 4th.

I must send my letter to the office to-night, for I go to Strawberry to-morrow for two or three days—not that we have
spring

spring or summer yet. I believe both seasons have perceived that nobody goes out of town till July, and that therefore it is not worth while to come over so early as they used to do. The sun might save himself the same trouble, and has no occasion to rise before ten at night; for all nature ought, no doubt, to take the *ton* from people of fashion, unless nature is willing to indulge them in the opportunity of contradicting her! Indeed, at present, our fine ladies seem to copy her—at least, the ancient symbols of her; for, though they do not exhibit a profusion of naked bobbies down to their shoe-buckles, yet they protrude a prominence of gauze that would cover all the dugs of Alma Mater. Don't, however, imagine that I am disposed to be a censor of modes, as most old folks are, who seem to think that they came into the world at the critical moment when everything was in perfection, and ought to suffer no farther innovation. On the contrary, I always maintain that the ordinances of the young are right. Who ought to invent fashions? Surely not the ancient. I tell my veteran cotemporaries that, if they will have patience for three months, the reigning evil, whatever it is, will be cured; whereas, if they fret till things are just as they should be, they may vex themselves to the day of doom. I carry this way of thinking still farther, and extend it to almost all reformations. Could one cure the world of being foolish, it were something; but to cure it of any one folly is only making room for some other, which, one is sure, will succeed to the vacant place.

Mr. Hastings used two days in his defence, which was not thought a very modest one, and rested rather on Machiavel's
code

code than on that of rigid moralists. The House is now hearing evidence; and as his counsel, Mr. Machiavel, will not challenge many of the jury, I suppose Mr. Hastings will be honourably acquitted. In fact, who but Machiavel can pretend that we have a shadow of title to a foot of land in India; unless, as our law deems that what is done extra-parochially is deemed to have happened in the parish of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, India must in course belong to the crown of Great Britain? Alexander distrained the goods and chattels of Porus upon a similar plea; and the popes thought all the world belonged to them, as heirs-at-law to One who had not an acre upon earth. We condemned and attainted the Popes without trial, which was not in fashion in the reign of Henry the Eighth, and, by the law of forfeiture, confiscated all their injustice to our own use; and thus, till we shall be ejected, have we a right to exercise all the tyranny and rapine that ever was practised by any of our predecessors anywhere,—as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

125. *To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway*

[Aetat 68]

Sunday night, June 18, 1786

I suppose you have been swearing at the east wind for parching your verdure, and are now weeping for the rain that drowns your hay. I have these calamities in common, and my constant and particular one,—people that come to see my house, which unfortunately is more in request than ever. Already I have had twenty-eight sets, have five more tickets given out; and
yesterday

yesterday, before I had dined, three German barons came. My house is a torment, not a comfort!

I was sent for again to dine at Gunnersbury¹ on Friday, and was forced to send to town for a dress-coat and a sword. There were the Prince of Wales, the Prince of Mecklenburg, the Duke of Portland, Lord Clanbrassil, Lord and Lady Clermont, Lord and Lady Southampton, Lord Pelham, and Mrs. Howe. The Prince of Mecklenburg went back to Windsor after coffee; and the Prince and Lord and Lady Clermont to town after tea, to hear some new French players at Lady William Gordon's. The Princess, Lady Barrymore, and the rest of us, played three pools at commerce till ten. I am afraid I was tired and gaped. While we were at the dairy the Princess insisted on my making some verses on Gunnersbury. I pleaded being superannuated. She would not excuse me. I promised she should have an ode on her next birthday, which diverted the Prince; but all would not do. So, as I came home, I made the following stanzas, and sent them to her breakfast next morning:—

In deathless odes for ever green
Augustus' laurels blow;
Nor e'er was grateful duty seen
In warmer strains to flow.

Oh, why is Flaccus not alive,
Your favorite scene to sing?
To Gunnersbury's charms could give
His lyre immortal spring.

If

¹ The seat of the Princess **Amelia**, the aunt of George III.

As warm as his my zeal for you,
Great princess! could I show it:
But though you have a Horace too—
Ah, Madam! he's no poet.

If they are but poor verses, consider I am sixty-nine, was half asleep, and made them almost extempore—and by command! However, they succeeded, and I received this gracious answer:—

I wish I had a name that could answer your pretty verses. Your yawning yesterday opened your vein for pleasing me; and I return you my thanks, my good Mr. Walpole, and remain sincerely your friend,

Amelia.¹

I think this is very genteel at seventy-five.

Do you know that I have bought the Jupiter Serapis as well as the Julio Clovio! ¹ Mr.—— assures me he has seen six of the head, and not one of them so fine, or so well preserved. I am glad Sir Joshua Reynolds saw no more excellence in the Jupiter than in the Clovio; or the Duke of Portland, I suppose, would have purchased it, as he has the vase, for a thousand pounds. I would not change. I told Sir William Hamilton and the late Duchess, when I never thought it would be mine, that I had rather have the head than the vase. I shall long for Mrs. Damer to make a bust to it, and then it will be still more valuable. I have deposited both the illumination and the Jupiter in Lady Di's cabinet,² which is worthy of them.
And

¹ At the sale of the Duchess Dowager of Portland.—WALPOLE.

² A cabinet at Strawberry Hill, ornamented with drawings by Lady Diana Beauclerc.—WALPOLE.

And here my collection winds up; I will not purchase trumpery after such jewels. Besides, everything is much dearer in old age, as one has less time to enjoy. Good night!

126. *To the Countess of Upper Ossory*

[Ætæt 69]

Strawberry Hill

Sept 6, 1787

I will not make a feigned excuse, Madam, nor catch at the pretence you kindly offer me of a lost letter; no, I confess honestly that I knew I owed you one, but was too conscientious to pay my just debts with the base currency of Richmond and Hampton Court, and I have no other specie. I know nothing, do nothing, but repeat the same insipid round that I have passed for so many summers, if summer this has been to be called. The dowagers of my canton pick up and dress up tales of what is done in London and at various watering-places; but I hold it a prudery becoming old men (the reverse of that of old women) not to trouble myself about or censure the frolics of the young; and for my contemporaries, so few of them are left, that unless by living to the age of Old Parr or Jenkins, we are not likely to commit anything remarkable. I have seen none of the French Savoyard, or Lorraine princes and princesses, sterling or pinchbeck: I broke off my *commercial treaty* with France, when I was robbed of half Madame du Deffand's¹ papers, and care no more for their *bonne compagnie*, than for
their

¹ Mme du Deffand willed all her letters and mss. to Walpole, but they were withheld by Prince Beauvan.

their convicts Monsieur de Calonné¹ and Madame de la Motte.²

Under such a negative existence, what could I write, Madam? I have heard nothing for these two months worth telling you but this little story. There lives at Kingston a Mrs. Barnard, a very wealthy hen-Quaker. She has a passion for beautiful black and white cows, never parts with a pretty calf, and consequently has now a hecatomb as striped and spotted as leopards and tigers. The Queen happened to see this ermined drove, and being struck with the beauty of their robes, sent a page to desire to purchase one. Mrs. Barnard replied, she never sold cows, but would lend her Majesty her bull with all her heart. Apropos to court, it is not a recent story, I believe, but did you ever hear, Madam, that Mrs. Herbert, the Bedchamber Woman, going in a hackney-chair, the chairmen were excessively drunk, and after tossing and jolting her for some minutes, set the chair down; and the foreman, lifting up the top, said, 'Madam, you are so drunk, that if you do not sit still, it will be impossible to carry you'?

To prove how little I had to say, I will empty my bimensual memory with the only other scrap I have collected, and which I may send in part of payment for the four lines of *Latin* of Archbishop Tenison, which I have received from your Ladyship. Mine is an ancient Latin saw, which proves that the famous bulse was a legal escheat to the crown. In the new
volume

¹ Calonne was at this time in England.—T.

² Jeanne de Luy de St. Rémy de Valois (1756-1791), Comtesse de la Motte, sentenced in 1786 to be branded and imprisoned for life for her share in the theft of Marie Antoinette's diamond necklace. On June 5, 1787, she escaped from the Salpêtrière prison and came to London.—T.

volume of the *Archæologia* is an essay on the state of the Jews in England in former times; and there it is said, 'Judæus vero nihil possidere potest, quia quicquid acquirit, acquirit regi.' I suppose nobody will dispute Mr. Hastings being a Jew; or, if you please, for *Judæus* you may read *Indicus*, so like are the words and the essence.

Many thanks for the advertisement, which is curious indeed! I have not visited Mr. Herschel's giant telescope, though so near me. In truth, the scraps I have learnt of his discoveries have confounded me: my little head will not contain the stupendous idea of an infinity of worlds; not that I at all disbelieve them, or anything that is above my comprehension. Infinite space may certainly contain whatever is put into it: and there is no reason for imagining that nothing has been put into it, but what our short-sighted eyes can see. Worlds, systems of suns and worlds may be as plenty as blackberries; but what can such an incredibly small point as a human skull do with the possibility of Omnipotence's endless creation? Do but suppose that I was to unfold to a pismire in my garden an account of the vast empire of China—not that there is any degree of proportion in the comparison. Proceed; suppose another pismire could form a prodigious, yet invisible, spying-glass, that should give the student ant a glimpse of the continent of China. Oh, I must stop: I shall turn my own brain, which, while it is launching into an ocean of universes, is still admiring pismire Herschel. That he should not have a *wise* look does not surprise me—he may be stupefied at his own discoveries; or to make them, it might require a head constructed too simply
to

to contain any diversity of attention to puny objects. Sir Isaac Newton, they say, was so absorbed in his pursuits, as to be something of a changeling in worldly matters; and when he descended to earth and conjecture he was no phenomenon.

I will alight from my altitudes, and confine myself to our own ant-hill. Have you seen, Madam, the horrible mandate of the Emperor to General Murray? Think of that insect's threatening to sacrifice thousands of his fellow pismires to what he calls *his dignity*! the dignity of a mite, that, supposing itself as superior as an earwig, meditates preventing hosts of its own species from enjoying the happiness and the moment of existence that has been allotted to them in an innumerable succession of ages! But while scorn, contempt, and hatred kindle against the Imperial insect, admiration crowds in for the brave pismires who so pathetically deprecate their doom, yet seem resigned to it! I think I never read anything more noble, more touching, than the remonstrance of the deputies to Prince Kaunitz.

If tyrant dignity is ready to burst on Brabant, appearances with us seem also too warlike. I shall be very sorry if it arrives. I flattered myself that in our humiliated state, the consequence of *our dignity*, we should at least be tame and tranquil for the remnant of my time; but what signifies care about moments? I will return to your letter; which set me afloat on the vasty deep of speculation, to which I am very unequal and do not love. My understanding is more on a level with your ball, and meditations on the destruction of Gorhambury, which I
regret

regret. It was in a very crazy state, but deserved to be propped; the situation is by no means delightful.

I called at Sir Joshua's, while he was at Amptill, and saw his Hercules for Russia. I did not at all admire it: the principal babe put me in mind of what I read so often, but have not seen, *the monstrous craws*. Master Hercules's knees are as large as, I presume, the late Lady Guilford's. *Blind* Tiresias is *staring* with horror at the terrible spectacle. If Sir Joshua is satisfied with his own departed picture, it is more than the possessors or posterity will be. I think he ought to be paid in annuities only for so long as his pictures last: one should not grudge him the first-fruits.

Mr. Gibbon's three volumes¹ I shall certainly read. I am fond of quartos: and I dare to say he has laboured these, and I shall be quite satisfied if they are equal to the first tome. The *Long Minuet* you may be sure I have, as I get everything I can of Mr. Bunbury's.

Though I have wandered into another sheet, I will not be so unconscionable as to fill more of it; and make your Ladyship repent your condescension of having awakened me. I will only ask whether you have heard that the Duchess of Kingston has adopted the eldest Meadows, paid his debts, given him 600*l.* a year, and intends to make him her heir? Methinks this is robbing Peter to pay *Peter*.

Stay, I forgot to tell you, Madam, that Miss Boyle has designed and carved in marble three medallions of boys, for a chimney

¹ The three last volumes of the *History*, finished in June, 1787, and published in 1788.—T.

chimney-piece, at Ditton. Lady Di has done two pictures for *Macbeth* and *Lear*: the latter with the madman is very fine. Now I have finished indeed.

127. *To Miss Hannah More*

[Aetat 70]

Strawberry Hill

Oct. 14, 1787

MY DEAR MADAM,—I am shocked for human nature at the repeated malevolence of this woman! ¹ The rank soil of riches we are accustomed to see overrun with seeds and thistles; but who could expect that the kindest seeds sown on poverty and dire misfortunes should meet with nothing but a rock at bottom? Catherine de' Medici, suckled by popes and transplanted to a throne, seems more excusable. Thank Heaven, Madam, for giving you so excellent a heart; ay, and so good a head. You are not only benevolence itself, but, with fifty times the genius of a Yearsley, you are void of vanity. How strange, that vanity should expel gratitude! Does not the wretched woman owe her fame to you, as well as her affluence? I can testify your labours for both. Dame Yearsley reminds me of the troubadours, those vagrants whom I used to admire till I knew their history; and who used to pour out trumpery verses, and flatter or abuse accordingly as they were housed and clothed, or dismissed to the next parish. Yet you did not set this person in the stocks, after procuring an annuity for her! I beg your pardon for renewing so disgusting a subject, and
will

¹ Mrs. Yearsley.—T.

will never mention it again. You have better amusement; you love good works, a temper superior to revenge.

I have again seen our poor friend in Clarges Street:¹ her faculties decay rapidly, and of course she suffers less. She has not an acquaintance in town; and yet told me the town was very full, and that she had had a good deal of company. Her health is re-established, and we must now be content that her mind is not restless. My pity now feels most for Mrs. Hancock,² whose patience is inexhaustible, though not insensible.

Mrs. Piozzi, I hear, has two volumes of Dr. Johnson's *Letters* ready for publication. Bruce is printing his *Travels*; which I suppose will prove that his narratives were fabulous, as he will scarce repeat them by the press. These, and two more volumes of Mr. Gibbon's *History*, are all the literary news I know. France seems sunk indeed in all respects. What stuff are their theatrical goods, their *Richards*, *Ninas*, and *Tarares*! But when their *Figaro* could run threescore nights, how despicable must their taste be grown! I rejoice that their political intrigues are not more creditable. I do not dislike the French from the vulgar antipathy between neighbouring nations, but for their insolent and unfounded airs of superiority. In arms we have almost always outshone them: and till they have excelled Newton, and come near to Shakespeare, pre-eminence in genius must remain with us. I think they are most entitled to triumph over the Italians; as, with the most meagre and
inharmonious

¹ Mrs. Vesey.—T.

² A lady who lived with Mrs. Vesey.—WALPOLE.

inharmonious of all languages, ~~the~~ French have made more of that poverty in tragedy and eloquence, than the Italians have done with the language the most capable of both. But I did not mean to send you a dissertation. I hope it will not be long before you remove to Hampton.—Yet why should I wish that? You will only be geographically nearer to London till February. Cannot you, now and then, sleep at the Adelphi¹ on a visit to poor Vesey and your friends, and let one know if you do?

Yours, my dear Madam, most sincerely,

HOR. WALPOLE.

128. *To Miss Hannah More*

[Aetat 70]

Strawberry Hill

July 12, 1788

Won't you repent having opened the correspondence, my dear Madam, when you find my letters come so thick upon you? In this instance, however, I am only to blame in part, for being too ready to take advice, for the sole reason for which advice ever is taken—because it fell in with my inclination.

You said in your last that you feared you took up time of mine to the prejudice of the public; implying, I imagine, that I might employ it in composing. Waiving both your compliment and my own vanity, I will speak very seriously to you on that subject, and with exact truth. My simple writings
have

¹ Mrs. Garrick, with whom Hannah More was at this time on very friendly terms, had a house in Adelphi Terrace.—T.

have had better fortune than they had any reason to expect; and I fairly believe, in a great degree, because gentlemen writers, who do not write for interest, are treated with some civility if they do not write absolute nonsense. I think so, because I have not unfrequently known much better works than mine much more neglected, if the name, fortune, and situation of the authors were below mine. I wrote early from youth, spirits, and vanity; and from both the last when the first no longer existed. I now shudder when I reflect on my own boldness; and with mortification, when I compare my own writings with those of any great authors. This is so true, that I question whether it would be possible for me to summon up courage to publish anything I have written, if I could recall time past, and should yet think as I think at present. So much for what is over and out of my power. As to writing now, I have totally forsworn the profession, for two solid reasons. One I have already told you; and it is, that I know my own writings are trifling and of no depth. The other is, that, light and futile as they were, I am sensible they are better than I could compose now. I am aware of the decay of the middling parts I had, and others may be still more sensible of it. How do I know but I am superannuated? nobody will be so coarse as to tell me so; but if I published dotage, all the world would tell me so. And who but runs that risk who is an author after seventy? What happened to the greatest author of this age, and who certainly retained a very considerable portion of his abilities for ten years after my age? Voltaire, at eighty-four, I think, went to Paris to receive the incense, in person, of his countrymen

countrymen, and to be witness of their admiration of a tragedy he had written at that Methusalem age. Incense he did receive till it choked him; and, at the exhibition of his play, he was actually crowned with laurel in the box where he sat. But what became of his poor play? It died as soon as he did—was buried with him; and no mortal, I dare to say, has ever read a line of it since, it was so bad.

As I am neither by a thousandth part so great, nor a quarter so little, I will herewith send you a fragment that an accidental rencontre set me upon writing, and which I found so flat that I would not finish it. Don't believe that I am either begging praise by the stale artifice of hoping to be contradicted; or that I think there is any occasion to make you discover my caducity. No; but the fragment contains a curiosity—English verses written by a French prince of the blood,¹ and which at first I had a mind to add to my *Royal and Noble Authors*; but as he was not a royal author of ours, and as I could not please myself with an account of him, I shall revert to my old resolution of not exposing my pen's grey hairs.

Of one passage I must take notice; it is a little indirect sneer at our crowd of authoresses. My choosing to send this to *you* is a proof that I think you an author, that is, a classic. But, in truth, I am nauseated by the Madams Piozzi, &c., and the host of novel writers in petticoats who think they imitate what is inimitable, *Evelina* and *Cecilia*. Your candour, I know, will not agree with me, when I tell you I am not at all charmed with Miss Seward and Mr. Hayley piping to one another: but *you*

I

¹ Charles d'Orléans.—T.

I exhort, and would encourage to write; and flatter myself you will never be royally gagged and promoted to fold muslins, as has been lately wittily said on Miss Burney,¹ in the list of five hundred living authors. *Your* writings promote virtues; and their increasing editions prove their worth and utility. If you question my sincerity, can you doubt my admiring you, when you have gratified my self-love so amply in your *Bas Bleu*?² Still, as much as I love your writings, I respect yet more your heart and your goodness. You are so good that I believe you would go to heaven, even though there were no Sunday, and only six *working* days in the week. Adieu, my best Madam!

Yours most cordially,

HOR. WALPOLE.

P. S. On recollection, I doubt I have before given you the same reasons for my lying fallow that I have in this letter. If so, why, it is like an old man to repeat himself—but at least I will not do so in print.

129. *To Miss Hannah More*

[Ætæt 70]

Strawberry Hill

Sept. 22, 1788

I don't like to defraud you of your compassion, my good friend

¹ Mrs. Delany procured for Fanny Burney the appointment of second keeper of the Queen's robes. This post she held for four years, when, her health seriously impaired, she with difficulty obtained permission to resign.

² The Men, not bound by pedant rules,
Nor Ladies' *precieuses ridicules*;
For polish'd Walpole shew'd the way,
How Wits may be both learn'd and gay.

friend, profuse as you are of it." I really suffered scarce any pain at all from my last fit of gout. I have known several persons who think there is a dignity in complaining; and, if you ask how they do, reply, 'Well, I *am*—pretty well—today; but if you knew what I suffered *yesterday!*' Now, methinks nobody has a right to tax another for pity on what is past; and besides, complaint of what is over can only make the hearer glad you are in pain no longer. Yes, yes, my dear Madam, you generally place your pity so profitably, that you shall not waste a drop upon me, who ought rather to be congratulated on being so well at my age.

Much less shall I allow you to make apologies for your admirable and proper conduct towards your poor protégée. And now you have told me the behaviour of a certain great dame, I will confess to you that I have known it some months by accident—nay, and tried to repair it. I prevailed on Lady ———, who as readily undertook the commission, and told the Countess of her treatment of you. Alas, the answer was, 'It is too late; I have no money.' No, but she has, if she has a diamond left. I am indignant; yet, do you know, not at this duchess, or that countess, but at the invention of ranks, and titles, and pre-eminence. I used to hate that king and t'other prince; but, alas! on reflection I find the censure ought to fall on human nature in general. They are made of the same stuff as we, and dare we say what we should be in their situation? Poor créatures! think how they are educated, or rather corrupted, early, how flattered! To be educated properly they should

should be led through hovels, and hospitals, and prisons. Instead of being reprimanded (and perhaps immediately after *sugar-plum'd*) for not learning their Latin or French grammar, they now and then should be kept fasting; and, if they cut their finger, should have no plaster till it festered. No part of a royal brat's memory, which is good enough, should be burthened but with the remembrance of human sufferings. In short, I fear our nature is so liable to be corrupted and perverted by greatness, rank, power, and wealth, that I am inclined to think that virtue is the compensation to the poor for the want of riches: nay, I am disposed to believe that the first footpad or highwayman had been a man of quality, or a prince, who could not bear having wasted his fortune, and was too lazy to work; for a beggar born would think labour a more natural way of getting a livelihood than venturing his life. I have something a similar opinion about common women. No modest girl thinks of many men, till she has been in love with one, has been ruined by him, and abandoned. But to return to my theme, and it will fall heavy on yourself. Could the milkwoman have been so bad, if you had merely kept her from starving, instead of giving her opulence? The soil, I doubt, was bad; but it could not have produced the rank weed of ingratitude, if you had not dunged it with gold, which rises from rock, and seems to meet with a congenial bed when it falls on the human heart.

And so Dr. Warton imagines I am writing Walpoliana! No, in truth, nor anything else; nor shall—nor will I go out in

a jest-book. Age has not only made me prudent, but, luckily, lazy; and, without the latter extinguisher, I do not know but that farthing candle my discretion would let my snuff of life flit to the last sparkle of folly, like what children call the parson and clerk in a bit of burnt paper. You see by my *writability* in pressing my letters on you, that my pen has still a colt's tooth left, but I never indulge the poor old child with more paper than this smallsized sheet; I do not give it enough to make a paper kite and fly abroad on wings of booksellers. You ought to continue writing, for you do good by your writings, or at least mean it; and if a virtuous intention fails, it is a sort of coin, which, though thrown away, still makes the donor worth more than he was before he gave it away. I delight too in the temperature of your piety, and that you would not see the enthusiastic exorcist. How shocking to suppose that the Omnipotent Creator of worlds delegates his power to a momentary insect to eject supernatural spirits that he had permitted to infest another insect, and had permitted to vomit blasphemies against himself! Pray do not call *that* enthusiasm, but delirium. I pity real enthusiasts, but I would shave their heads and take away some blood. The exorcist's associates are in a worse predicament, I doubt, and hope to *make* enthusiasts. If such abominable impostors were not rather a subject of indignation, I could smile at the rivalry between them and the animal magnetists, who are inveigling fools into their different pales. And, alas! while folly has a shilling left, there will be enthusiasts and quack doctors; and there will
be

be slaves while there are kings or sugar-planters. I have remarked that though Jesuits, &c., travel to distant east and west to propagate their religion and traffic, I never heard of one that made a journey into Asia or Africa to preach the doctrines of liberty, though those regions are so deplorably oppressed. Nay, I much doubt whether ever any chaplain of the regiments we have sent to India has once whispered to a native of Bengal, that there are milder forms of government than those of his country. No; security of property is not a wholesome doctrine to be inculcated in a land where the soil produces diamonds and gold! In short, if your Bristol exorcist believes he can cast out devils, why does he not go to Leadenhall Street? There is a company whose name is legion.

By your *gambols*, as you call them, after the most ungambolling peeress¹ in Christendom, and by your jaunts, I conclude, to my great satisfaction, that you are quite well. Change of scene and air are good for your spirits; and September, like all our old ladies, has given itself May airs, and must have made your journey very pleasant. Yet you will be glad to get back to your Cowslip Green, though it may offer you nothing but Michaelmas daisies. When you do leave it, I wish you could persuade Mrs. Garrick to settle sooner in London. There is full as good hay to be made in town at Christmas as at Hampton, and some haymakers that will wish for you, particularly your most sincere friend,

HOR. WALPOLE.

I

¹ The Dowager Duchess of Beaufort, a very stiff and stately personage.—T.

130. To the Countess of Upper Ossory

[Aetat 71]

Strawberry Hill

Oct. 11, 1788

I am sorry, Madam, that *mes villageoises* have no better provender than my *sylogisms* to send to their correspondents, nor am I ambitious of rivalling the barber or innkeeper, and becoming the wit of five miles round. I remember how, long ago, I estimated local renown at its just value by a sort of little adventure that I will tell you; and, since that, there is an admirable chapter somewhere in Voltaire which shows that more extended fame is but local on a little larger scale; it is the chapter of the Chinese who goes into a European bookseller's shop, and is amazed at finding none of the works of his most celebrated countrymen; while the bookseller finds the stranger equally ignorant of western classics.

Well, Madam, here is my tiny story: I went once with Mr. Rigby to see a window of painted glass at Messing, in Essex, and dined at a better sort of alehouse. The landlady waited on us and was notably loquacious, and entertained us with the *bons mots* and funny exploits of Mr. Charles; Mr. Charles said this, Mr. Charles played such a trick: oh, nothing was so pleasant as Mr. Charles. But how astonished the poor soul was when we asked who Mr. Charles was; and how much more astonished when she found we had never heard of Mr. Charles Luckyn, who, it seems, is a relation of Lord Grimston, had lived

lived in their village, and been the George Selwyn of half a dozen cottages.

If I had a grain of ambitious pride left, it is what, in other respects, has been the thread that has run through my life, that of being forgotten; so true, except the folly of being an author, has been what I said last year to the Prince of Wales when he asked me if I was a Freemason. I replied, 'No, Sir; I never was anything.'

Apropos to the Prince; I am sorry you do not approve of my offering to kiss the Duke's hand when he came to see my house. I never had been presented to him; but, moreover, as I am very secure of never being suspected to pay my court for interest, and certainly never seek royal personages, I always pique myself, when thrown in their way, upon showing that I know I am nobody, and know the distance between them and me: this I take to be common sense, and do not repent of my behaviour. If I were a grandee and in place, I would not, like the late Duchess of Northumberland, jig after them, calling them my master and my mistress. I think, if I were their servant, I would as little, like the same Grace, parade before the Queen with more footmen than her Majesty. *That* was impertinent.

I am sorry, for the third time of this letter, that I have no new village anecdotes to send your Ladyship, since they divert you for a moment. I have one, but some months old. Lady Charleville, my neighbour, told me three months ago, that, having some company with her, one of them had been to see Strawberry. 'Pray,' said another, 'who is that Mr. Walpole?'

Lord

‘Lord!’ cried a third, ‘don’t you know the great epicure, Mr. Walpole?’ ‘Pho!’ said the first, ‘great epicure! you mean the antiquarian.’ There, Madam, surely this anecdote may take its place in the chapter of local fame. If I have picked up no recent anecdotes on our Common, I have made a much more, to me, precious acquisition. It is the acquaintance of two young ladies of the name of Berry,¹ whom I first saw last winter, and who accidentally took a house here with their father for this season. Their story is singular enough to entertain you. The grandfather,² a Scot, had a large estate in his own country, 5,000*l.* a year, it is said; and a circumstance I shall tell you makes it probable. The eldest son married, for love, a woman with no fortune. The old man was enraged and would not see him. The wife died and left these two young ladies. Their grandfather wished for an heir male, and pressed the widower to remarry, but could not prevail; the son declaring he would consecrate himself to his daughters and their education. The old man did not break with him again, but much worse

¹ Mary Berry (1763-Nov. 1852), and Agnes Berry (1764-Jan. 1852), daughters of Robert Berry (d. 1817) by a daughter of John Seton, of Kirkbridge, Yorkshire. Horace Walpole’s liking for the Miss Berrys soon developed into an affection to which his letters to them abundantly testify. He secured as much of their society as possible. They owed to him a position in society which they kept until the end of their days. It is stated, on the authority of Miss Berry’s maid, who survived until 1896 or 1897, that Walpole offered his ‘hand and heart’ to Mary Berry and his ‘hand and coronet’ to Agnes Berry—doubtless with a view of securing their constant society.

In 1796 Miss Berry became engaged to General Charles O’Hara, Governor of Gibraltar, but the engagement was broken off in six months’ time. The rest of the long lives of the two sisters was uneventful.

Horace Walpole left to the Miss Berrys a sum of money, and the house at Little Strawberry Hill which had been their country residence during his lifetime. Mary Berry edited Horace Walpole’s *Works* (London, 1798, 5 vols. 4to), though the editorship is commonly attributed to her father, and the *Letters of the Marquise du Deffand to Horace Walpole* (London, 1810, 4 vols. 12mo).—T.

² It was not Mr. Berry’s father who disinherited him, but his maternal uncle, Mr. Ferguson, a successful Scotch merchant, who made a large fortune, and purchased the estate of Raith in Fifeshire.—T.

worse, totally disinherited him, and left all to his second son, who very handsomely gave up 800*l.* a year to his elder brother. Mr. Berry has since carried his daughters for two or three years to France and Italy, and they are returned the best-informed and the most perfect creatures I ever saw at their age. They are exceedingly sensible, entirely natural and unaffected, frank, and, being qualified to talk on any subject, nothing is so easy and agreeable as their conversation—not more apposite than their answers and observations. The eldest, I discovered by chance, understands Latin and is a perfect Frenchwoman in her language. The younger draws charmingly, and has copied admirably Lady Di's gipsies, which I lent, though for the first time of her attempting colours. They are of pleasing figures; Mary, the eldest, sweet, with fine dark eyes, that are very lively when she speaks, with a symmetry of face that is the more interesting from being pale; Agnes, the younger, has an agreeable sensible countenance, hardly to be called handsome, but almost. She is less animated than Mary, but seems, out of deference to her sister, to speak seldomer, for they dote on each other, and Mary is always praising her sister's talents. I must even tell you they dress within the bounds of fashion, though fashionably; but without the excrescences and balconies with which modern hoydens overwhelm and barricade their persons. In short, good sense, information, simplicity, and ease characterize the Berrys; and this is not particularly mine, who am apt to be prejudiced, but the universal voice of all who know them. The first night I met them I would not be acquainted with them, having heard so much in their praise that

I concluded they would be all *prétension*. The second time, in a very small company, I sat next to Mary, and found her an angel both inside and out. Now I do not know which I like best, except Mary's face, which is formed for a sentimental novel, but is ten times fitter for a fifty times better thing, genteel comedy. This delightful family comes to me almost every Sunday evening, as our region is too *proclamatory* to play at cards on the seventh day. I do not care a straw for cards, but I do disapprove of this partiality to the youngest child of the week: while the other poor six days are treated as if they had no souls to save. I forgot to tell you that Mr. Berry is a little merry man with a round face, and you would not suspect him of so much feeling and attachment. I make no excuse for such minute details; for, if your Ladyship insists on hearing the humours of my district, you must for once indulge me with sending you two pearls that I found in my path.

131. *To Miss Mary and Miss Agnes Berry*

[Aetat 71]

April 28, at night, 1789

By my not saying *no* to Thursday, you, I trust, understood that I meant *yes*; and so I do. In the meantime, I send you the most delicious poem upon earth. If you don't know what it is all about, or why, at least you will find glorious similes about everything in the world, and I defy you to discover three bad verses in the whole stack. Dryden was but the prototype of

The

*The Botanic Garden*¹ in his charming *Flower and Leaf*; and if he had less meaning, it is true he had more plan: and I must own that his white velvets and green velvets, and rubies and emeralds, were much more virtuous gentlefolks than most of the flowers of the creation, who seem to have no fear of Doctors' Commons before their eyes. This is only the second part; for, like my king's eldest daughter in the *Hieroglyphic Tales*, the first part is not born yet:—no matter. I can read this over and over again for ever; for though it is so excellent, it is impossible to remember anything so disjointed, except you consider it as a collection of short enchanting poems—as the Circe at her tremendous devilries in a church; the intrigue of the dear nightingale and rose; and the description of Medea; the episode of Mr. Howard, which ends with the most sublime of lines—in short, all, all, all is the most lovely poetry. And then one sighs that such profusion of poetry, magnificent and tender, should be thrown away on what neither interests nor instructs, and, with all the pains the notes take to explain, is scarce intelligible.

How strange it is that a man should have been inspired with such enthusiasm of poetry by poring through a microscope, and peeping through the keyholes of all the seraglios of all the flowers in the universe! I hope his discoveries may leave any impression but of the universal polygamy going on in the vegetable world, where, however, it is more gallant than amongst [the] human race; for you will find that they are the botanic ladies who keep harems, and not the gentlemen.

Still

¹ By Dr. Erasmus Darwin, grandfather of Charles Darwin.

Still, *I* will maintain that it is much better that we should have two wives than your sex two husbands. So pray don't mind Linnaeus and Dr. Darwin; Dr. Madan had ten times more sense. Adieu!

Your doubly constant

TELYPTHORUS.

132. *To Miss Mary and Miss Agnes Berry*

[Aetat 71]

Strawberry Hill

Tuesday, June 23, 1789

I am not a little disappointed and mortified at the post bringing me no letter from you to-day; you promised to write on the road. I reckon you arrived at your station on Sunday evening: if you do not write till next day, I shall have no letter till Thursday!

I am not at all consoled for my double loss: my only comfort is, that I flatter myself the journey and air will be of service to you both. The latter has been of use to me, though the part of the element of air has been chiefly acted by the element of water, as my poor haycocks feel! Tonton¹ does not miss you so much as I do, not having so good a taste; for he is grown very fond of *me*, and I return it for your sakes, though he deserves it too, for he is perfectly good-natured and tractable; but he is not beautiful, like his 'god dog,' as Mr. Selwyn, who dined here on Saturday, called my poor late favourite; especially

¹ A dog belonging to the Miss Berrys, left in Horace Walpole's care during their absence in Yorkshire.—T.

especially as I have had him clipped. The shearing has brought to light a nose an ell long; and, as he has now *nasum rhinocerotis*, I do not doubt but he will be a better critic in poetry than Dr. Johnson, who judged of harmony by the principles of an author, and fancied, or wished to make others believe, that no Jacobite could write bad verses, nor a Whig good.

I passed so many evenings of the last fortnight with you, that I almost preferred it to our two honeymoons, and consequently am the more sensible to the deprivation; and how dismal was *Sunday* evening, compared to those of last autumn! If you both felt as I do, we might surpass *any* event in the annals of Dunmow. Oh, what a prodigy it would be if a husband and *two* wives should present themselves and demand the flitch of bacon, on swearing that not one of the three in a year and a day had wished to be unmarried! For my part, I know that my affection has done nothing but increase; though were there but one of you, I should be ashamed of being so strongly attached at my age; being in love with both, I glory in my passion, and think it a proof of my sense. Why should not two affirmatives make a negative, as well as the reverse? and then a double love will be wisdom—for what is wisdom in reality but a negative? It exists but by correcting folly, and when it has peevishly prevailed on us to abstain from something we have a mind to, it gives itself airs, and in action pretends to be a personage, a nonentity sets up for a figure of importance! It is the case of most of those phantoms called virtues, which, by smothering poor vices, claim a reward as
thief

thief-takers do. You know I have a partiality for drunkenness, though, I never practised it: it is a reality; but what is sobriety, only the absence of drunkenness? However, *mes chères femmes*, I make a difference between women and men, and do not extend my doctrine to your sex. Everything is excusable in us, and nothing in you. And pray remember that I will not lose my flitch of bacon—though.

Have you shed a tear over the Opera House? ¹ or do you agree with me that there is no occasion to rebuild it? The nation has long been tired of operas, and has now a good opportunity of dropping them. Dancing protracted their existence for some time! But *the room after* was the real support of both, and was like what has been said of your sex, that they never speak their true meaning but in the postscript of their letters. Would not it be sufficient to build an after-room on the whole *emplacement*, to which people might resort from all assemblies? It should be a codicil to all the diversions of London; and the greater the concourse, the more excuse there would be for staying all night, from the impossibility of ladies getting their coaches to drive up. To be crowded to death in a waiting-room, at the end of an entertainment, is the whole joy; for who goes to any diversion till the last minute of it? I am persuaded that, instead of retrenching St. Athanasius's Creed, as the Duke of Grafton proposed in order to draw *good company* to church, it would be more efficacious if the congregation were to be indulged with an after-room in the vestry; and

¹ Burned down on the night of June 17, 1789.—T.

and, instead of two or three being gathered together, there would be all the world, before prayers would be quite over.

Wednesday.—I calculated too rightly; no letter to-day! yet I am not proud of my computation, I had rather have heard of you to-day; it would have looked like keeping your promise. It has a bad air your forgetting me so early; nay, and after your scoffing me for supposing you would not write till your arrival I don't know where. You see I think of *you*, and write every day, though I cannot dispatch my letter till you have sent me a direction. Much the better I am indeed for your not going to Switzerland. Yorkshire is in the glaciers for me, and you are as cold as Mr. Palmer. Miss Agnes was coy, and was not so flippant of promising me letters; well, but I do trust she *will* write, and then, Madam, she and I will go to Dunmow without you.

Apropos, as Mrs. Cambridge's beauty has kept so unfaded, and Mr. Cambridge's passion is so undiminished, and as they are good economists, I am astonished they have laid in no stock of bacon, when they could have it for asking.

Thursday night

Despairing, beside a clear stream
A shepherd forsaken was laid;

not very close to the stream, but within-doors in sight of it; for in this damp weather a lame old Colin cannot lie and despair with any comfort on a wet bank: but I smile against the grain, and am seriously alarmed at Thursday being come, and no letter! I dread one of you being ill, and then shall
detest

detest the Duke of Northumberland's rapacious steward more than ever. Mr. Batt and the Abbé Nicholls dined with me to-day, and I could talk of you *en pais de connoissance*. They tried to persuade me that I have no cause to be in a fright about you; but I have such perfect faith in the kindness of both of you, as I have in your possessing every other virtue, that I cannot believe but some sinister accident must have prevented my hearing from you. I wish Friday was come! I cannot write about anything else till I have a letter.

Friday, 26th.—My anxiety increases daily, for still I have no letter; you cannot all three be ill, and if any one is, I should flatter myself another would have written, or if any accident has happened. Next to your having met with some ill luck, I should be mortified at being forgotten so suddenly. Of any other vexation I have no fear; so much goodness and good sense as you both possess would make me perfectly easy if I were really your husband. I must then suspect some accident, and shall have no tranquillity till a letter puts me out of pain. Jealous I am not, for two young ladies cannot have run away with their father to Gretna Green. Hymen, O Hymenae! bring me good news to-morrow, and a direction too, or you do nothing.

Saturday.—Io Paean! Io Tonton! At last I have got a letter, and you are all well! And I am so pleased, that I forget the four uneasy days I have passed—at present I have neither time or paper to say more, for our post turns on its heel and goes out the instant it is come. I am in some distress
still

still, for, thoughtless creature, you have sent me no direction—luckily Lady Cecilia told me yesterday you had bidden her direct to you to be left at the post-house at York, which was more than you told me; but I will venture. If you do receive this, I beseech you never forget, as you move about, to send me new directions.

Do not be frightened at the enormity of this, I do not mean to continue so fourpaginous in every letter. Mr. C.¹ has this instant come in, and would damp me if I were going to scribble more. Adieu, adieu, adieu all three.

Your dutiful son-in-law and most affectionate husband,

H. W.

P. S. I beg pardon, I see on the last side of your letter there is a direction.

133. *To Miss Hannah More*

[Ætæt 71]

Strawberry Hill

June 23, 1789

Madam Hannah,—You are an errant reprobate, and grow wickeder and wickeder every day. You deserve to be treated like a *nègre*; and your favourite Sunday, to which you are so partial, that you treat the other poor six days of the week as if they had no souls to be saved, should, if I could have my will,

Shine no Sabbath-day for you.

Now

¹ Mr. Cambridge.—T.

Now, don't simper, and look as innocent as if virtue would not melt in your mouth—can you deny the following charges?

I lent you *The Botanic Garden*, and you returned it without writing a syllable, or saying where you were or whither you was going—I suppose for fear I should know how to direct to you—why, if I did send a letter after you, could not you keep it three months without an answer, as you did last year?

In the next place, you and your *nine* accomplices, who, by the way, are too good in keeping you company, have clubbed the prettiest poem ¹ imaginable, and communicated it to Mrs. Boscawen, with injunctions not to give a copy of it—I suppose because you are ashamed of having written a panegyric—when ever you *do* compose a satire, you are ready enough to publish it—at least, whenever you do, you will din one to death with it.—But now, mind your perverseness; that very pretty novel poem, and I must own it is charming, have you gone and spoiled, flying in the faces of your best friends the Muses, and keeping no *measures* with them—I'll be shot if they dictated two of the best lines with two syllables too much in each—nay, you have weakened one of them,

Ev'n Gardiner's mind

is far more expressive than *steadfast* Gardiner's—and, as Mrs. Boscawen says, whoever knows anything of Gardiner could not want that superfluous epithet—and whoever does not would not be the wiser for your foolish insertion—Mrs. Boscawen did not call it foolish, but I do.

The

¹ *Bonner's Ghost.*

The second line, as Mesdemoiselles handed it to you, Miss, was,

And all be free and saved—

not *All be free and all be saved*: the second *all be* is a most unnecessary tautology. The poem was perfect and faultless, if you could have let it alone. I wonder how your mischievous flippancy could help maiming that most new and beautiful expression, *sponge of sins*; I should not have been surprised, as you love verses too full of feet, if you had changed it to *that scrubbing-brush of sins*.

Well, I will say no more now: but if you do not order me a copy of *Bonner's Ghost* incontinently, never dare to look my printing-house in the face again.—Or come, I'll tell you what; I will forgive all your enormities if you will let me print your poem. I like to filch a little immortality out of others, and the Strawberry Press could never have a better opportunity. I will not haggle for the public—I will be content with printing only two hundred copies, of which you shall have half, and I half.—It shall cost you nothing but a yes. I only propose this in case you do not mean to print it yourself. Tell me sincerely which you like—but as to not printing it at all, charming and unexceptionable as it is, you cannot be so preposterous.

I by no means have a thought of detracting from your own share in your own poem; but, as I do suspect that it caught some inspiration from your devout¹ perusal of *The Botanic Garden*, so I hope you will discover that *my* style is much improved

¹ This word is scratched out and omitted in the letter as hitherto printed, but can still be made out.—T.

improved by having lately studied Madame Piozzi's¹ *Travels*—there I dipped, and not in St. Gyles's Pound, where one would think she² had been educated.—Adieu!

Your friend,

Or, mortal foe,

As you behave on the present occasion,

H. WALPOLE.

134. *To Miss Mary Berry*

[Aetat 71]

Ex Officinâ Arbutianâ

July 19, 1789

Such unwriting wives I never knew! and a shame it is for an author, and what is more, for a printer, to have a couple so unletteral. I can find time amidst all the hurry of my shop to write small quartos to them continually. In France, where nuptiality is not the virtue most in request, a wife will write to her consort, though the *doux billet* should contain but two sentences, of which I will give you a precedent. A lady sent the following to her spouse: 'Je vous écris, parce que je n'ai rien à faire; et je finis, parce que je n'ai rien à vous dire.' I do not wish for quite so laconic a *poulet*; besides, your Ladyships *can* write. Mrs. Damer dined here yesterday, and had just heard from you. Brevity, Mesdames, may be catching—don't pretend not to care, for you are dying for news from France, but not a spoonful shall you have from me to-day; and

¹ The name is scratched out in the original, but can still be read.—T.

² Altered (by Hannah More) in the original to 'this,' and the word 'author' inserted, to conceal the mention of Mrs. Piozzi.—T.

and if I was not a man of honour, though a printer, and had not promised you *Bonner's Ghost*, I would be as silent as if I were in Yorkshire. Remember too, that Miss Hannah More, though not so proper for the French Ambassador's *fête* as Miss Gunning,¹ can teach Greek and Latin as well as any young lady in the north of England, and might make as suitable a companion for a typographer. I will say no more, for this *shall* be a short note.

Sunday night, late.

I break my word to myself, though you do not deserve it, for I have had no letter to-day from either of you, and now can have none till Tuesday; but I am just come from Richmond, where I have seen an authentic account of the horrible scene at Paris. There had been dismal accounts for three days, but I hoped they had been exaggerated. They are too true. The Duc de Luxembourg and his family are arrived in London, having escaped with difficulty, 300,000 livres being set on his head, as the same sum is on Marshal Broglie's, and 500,000 on the Comte d'Artois's. The people rose on this day se'nnight, seized all the arms they could find, searched convents, found stores of corn, and obliged the monks to deal it out at reasonable prices. They have beheaded the *Lieutenant de Police*, or the *Prévôt des Marchands*, or both, and attacked the Bastille, which the governor refused to surrender; and on the populace rushing

¹ Elizabeth, only child of General John Gunning, and niece of Elizabeth Gunning, Duchess of Argyll. In 1791 Miss Gunning became notorious in connection with her own and her mother's attempts to prove that the Marquises of Lorne and Blandford had offered her marriage. Both the so-called suitors denied the truth of Miss Gunning's statement, and she remained single till 1803, when she married a Major Plunkett.—T.

rushing in, he fired on them with ~~four~~ great guns loaded with nails, and killed 300 or 400, but they mastered him, and dragged him and his major to the Place de Grève, and chopped off their hands and heads. The *bourgeoisie*, however, have disarmed the mob, but have seized the arsenal, and the Hôtel de Ville and the treasure there, which they destine to pay the sums for the heads of the proscribed.

On Wednesday the King with only his two brothers went to the Assemblée Nationale, and offered to concur with them in any measures for restoring order. They returned him an answer by eighty deputies, but the result is not known. The Duke of Dorset's courier is not arrived, nobody, it is supposed, being suffered to go out of the city.

Marshal Broglie is encamped before Versailles with 25,000 men, who are said ready to support the King.

You will want to ask a thousand questions, which I could not answer—nor will I when I can, if neither of you will write to me.

I dined to-day at Mrs. Walsingham's with the Pen-hood, and to-morrow I am to carry thirty *Ghosts* to the Bishop of London. So I am finishing this at past midnight, and shall send it before I go to Mr. Ellis to be franked.

These two days have been very fine, and I trust have restored riding in Yorkshire. If I ever do receive another letter, I hope it will give me an account of restored health, for my anger is but a grain of mustard in comparison of my solicitude. Good night! good night!

It

135. To Miss Hannah More

[Ætæt 72]

Berkeley Square

Feb. 20, 1790

It is very provoking that people must always be hanging or drowning themselves, or going mad, that you forsooth, Mistress, may have the diversion of exercising your pity and good nature, and charity, and intercession, and all that bead-roll of virtues that make you so troublesome and amiable, when you might be ten times more agreeable by writing things that would not cost one above half a crown at a time. You are an absolutely walking hospital, and travel about into lone and by-places, with your doors open to house stray casualties! I wish at least that you would have some children yourself, that you might not be plaguing one for all the pretty brats that are starving and friendless. I suppose it was some such goody two or three thousand years ago that suggested the idea of an alma-mater, suckling the three hundred and sixty-five bantlings of the Countess of Hainault. Well, as your newly-adopted pensioners have *two* babes, I insist on your accepting *two* guineas for them instead of one at present (that is, when you shall be present). If you cannot circumscribe your own charities, you shall not stint mine, Madam, who can afford it much better, and who must be dunned for alms, and do not scramble over hedges and ditches in searching for opportunities of flinging away my money on good works. I employ mine better at auctions, and in buying pictures and baubles, and hoarding curiosities

curiosities, that in truth I cannot keep long, but that will last *for ever* in my catalogue, and make me immortal! Alas! will they cover a multitude of sins? Adieu! I cannot jest after *that* sentence.

Yours most sincerely,

HOR. WALPOLE.

136. *To Miss Mary Berry*

[Aetat 73]

Berkeley Square

May 12, 1791

A letter from Florence (that of April 20th) does satisfy me about your dear nose, till I can see it with my own eyes; but I will own to you now that my alarm at first went much farther. I dreaded lest so violent a fall upon rubbish might not have hurt your head; though all your letters since have proved how totally that escaped any damage. Yet your great kindness in writing to me yourself so immediately did not tranquilize me, and only proved your good nature; that I had no high opinion of Italian surgeons—but I will not detail my departed fears, nor need I prove my attachment to you two. If you were really my wives, I could not be more generally applied to for accounts of you; of which I am proud. I should be ashamed if, at my age, it were a ridiculous attachment; but don't be sorry for having been circumstantial. My fears did not spring thence, nor did I suspect your not having told the whole—no! but I apprehended the accident might be worse than you knew yourself.

Poor

Poor Hugh Conway, though his life has long been safe, still suffers at times from his dreadful blow, and has not yet been able to come to town: nor would Lord Chatham's humanity put his ship into commission; which made him so unhappy, that poor Horatia, doting on him as she does, wrote to beg he might be employed; preferring her own misery in parting with him to what she saw him suffer. Amiable conduct! but, happily, her suit did not prevail.

I am not at all surprised at the private interviews between L. and C. I am persuaded that the first must and will take more part than he has yet seemed to do, and so will others too; but as speculations are but guesses, I will say no more on the subject now; nor on your English and Irish travellers, none of whom I know. I have one general wish, that you may be amused while you stay by the natives of any nation; and I thank you a thousand times for confirming your intention of returning by the beginning of November; which I should not desire *coolly*, but from the earnest wish of putting you in possession of Cliveden while I live: which everybody would approve, at least, not wonder at (Mr. Batt, to whom I have communicated my intention, does extremely); and the rest would follow of course, as I had done the same for Mrs. Clive.

I smiled at your making excuses for your double letter. Do you think I would not give twelve pence to hear more of you and your proceedings, than a single sheet would contain?

The Prince is recovered: that is all the domestic news, except a most memorable debate last Friday in the House of Commons

mons. Mr. Fox had most imprudently thrown out a panegyric on the French Revolution. His most considerable friends were much hurt, and protested to him against such sentiments. Burke went much farther, and vowed to attack those opinions. Great pains were taken to prevent such altercation, and the Prince of Wales is said to have written a dissuasive letter to Burke; but he was immovable; and on Friday, on the Quebec Bill,¹ he broke out, and sounded a trumpet against the plot, which he denounced as carrying on here. Prodigious clamour and interruption arose from Mr. Fox's friends; but he, though still applauding the French, burst into tears and lamentations on the loss of Burke's friendship, and endeavoured to make atonement; but in vain, though Burke wept too. In short, it was the most affecting scene possible; and undoubtedly *an unique* one, for both the commanders were in earnest and sincere. Yesterday, a second act was expected; but mutual friends prevailed, that the contest should not be renewed: nay, on the same bill, Mr. Fox made a profession of his faith, and declared he would venture his life in support of the *present* constitution by King, Lords, and Commons. In short, I never knew a wiser dissertation, if the newspapers deliver it justly; and I think all the writers in England cannot give more profound sense to Mr. Fox than he possesses. I know no more particulars, having seen nobody this morning yet.

I will deliver your message to Mr. P. Do you know he is not a little infected with (I mean no harm) the French disorder? Mrs. Buller says: 'did you ever know P. start anything

¹ Relative to a new constitution for Canada.—T.

thing of his own?’ I will not tell her or him what you say of his letter. But what shall I tell you else? We have expected Mrs. D. from last night; and perhaps she may arrive before this sets out to-morrow.

You know my infinity of nephews and nieces—I am always at a wedding or christening. Two nights ago I was godfather with Lord Chatham and Princess Sophia of Gloucester (represented by Miss Dee) to Horace Churchill’s¹ new-born son: it is christened Chatham Horace but is to be called by the latter—it could not, while young, be called *Chat*, *Chat*! Though all archdukes wear the Virgin’s name first (with fifty others) nobody says, ‘Come hither, Moll’—at least no mortal ever did, but the late Landgrave of Hesse, who had learned that vulgarism and used it about his wife, Princess Mary, when he spoke of her to her sisters Amalie and Caroline, who did not guess whom he meant.

Friday morning, May 13th.

Last night we were at Lady Fred. Campbell’s—the usual cribbage party, Conways, Mount-Edgcumbes, Johnstones. At past ten Mrs. Damer was announced! Her parents ran down into the hall, and I scrambled down some of the stairs. She looks vastly well, was in great spirits, and not at all fatigued; though she came from Dover, had been twelve hours at sea from Calais, and had rested but four days at Paris from Madrid. We supped, and stayed till one o’clock; and I shall go to her as soon as I am dressed. Madrid and the Escorial, she

¹ Walpole’s nephew.

she owns, have gained her a proselyte to painting, which her statuarism had totally engrossed—in her, no wonder. Of Titian she had no idea, nor have I a just one, though great faith, as at Venice all his works are now coal-black; but Rubens, she says, amazed her, and that in Spain he has even grace. Her father, yesterday morning, from pain remaining still in his shoulder from his fall, had it examined by Dr. Hunter; and a little bone of the collar was found to be broken, and he must wear his arm for some days in a sling.

Miss Boyle, I heard last night, had consented to marry Lord Henry Fitzgerald. I think they have both chosen well, but I have chosen better. Adieu! *Care spouse!*

137. *To Miss Mary Berry*

[Aetat 73]

Berkeley Square

May 26, 1791

I am rich in letters from you: I received that by Lord Elgin's courier first, as you expected, and its elder the next day. You tell me mine entertain you; *tant mieux*. It is my wish, but my wonder; for I live so very little in the world, that I do not know the present generation by sight: for, though I pass by them in the streets, the hats with valances, the folds above the chin of the ladies, and the dirty shirts and shaggy hair of the young men, who have *levelled nobility* almost as much as the *mobility* in France have, have confounded all individuality. Besides, if I did go to public places and assemblies, which my going to roost earlier prevents, the bats and owls do not begin
to

to fly abroad till far in the night, when they begin to see and be seen. However, one of the empresses of fashion, the Duchess of Gordon, uses fifteen or sixteen hours of her four-and-twenty. I heard her journal of last Monday. She first went to Handel's music in the Abbey; she then clambered over the benches, and went to Hastings's trial in the Hall; after dinner, to the play; then to Lady Lucan's assembly; after that to Ranelagh, and returned to Mrs. Hobart's faro-table; gave a ball herself in the evening of that morning, into which she must have got a good way; and set out for Scotland the next day. Hercules could not have achieved a quarter of her labours in the same space of time. What will the Great Duke think of our Amazons, if he has letters opened, as the Emperor was wont! One of our Camillas,¹ but in a freer style, I hear, he saw (I fancy, just before your arrival); and he must have wondered at the familiarity of the dame, and the nincompoop-hood of her Prince. Sir W.H. is arrived—his Nymph of the Attitudes² was too prudish to visit the rambling peeress.

Mrs. Cholmeley was so very good as to call on me again yesterday; Mr. French was with me, and fell in love with her understanding, and probably with her face too—but with that he did not trust me. He says we shall have Dr. Darwin's stupendous poem in a fortnight, of which you saw parts. Geo. Cholmondeley's wife, after a dreadful labour, is delivered of a dead child.

The rest of my letter must be literary; for we have no
news

¹ Lady Craven.—T.

² The famous Lady Hamilton.

news. Boswell's book is gossiping; but, having numbers of proper names, would be more readable, at least by me, were it reduced from two volumes to one: but there are woful *longueurs*, both about his hero and himself, the *fidus Achates*; about whom one has not the smallest curiosity. But I wrong the original Achates: one is satisfied with his fidelity in keeping his master's secrets and weaknesses, which modern led-captains betray for their patron's glory and to hurt their own enemies: which Boswell has done shamefully, particularly against Mrs. Piozzi, and Mrs. Montagu, and Bishop Percy. Dr. Blagden says justly, that it is a new kind of libel, by which you may abuse anybody, by saying some dead person said so-and-so of somebody alive. Often, indeed, Johnson made the most brutal speeches to living persons; for though he was good-natured at bottom, he was very ill-natured at top. He loved to dispute to show his superiority. If his opponents were weak, he told them they were fools; if they vanquished him, he was scurrilous—to nobody more than to Boswell himself, who was contemptible for flattering him so grossly, and for enduring the coarse things he was continually vomiting on Boswell's own country, Scotland. I expected, amongst the excommunicated, to find myself, but am very gently treated. I never would be in the least acquainted with Johnson; or, as Boswell calls it, had not a just value for him; which the biographer imputes to my resentment for the Doctor's putting bad arguments (purposely, out of Jacobitism) into the speeches which he wrote fifty years ago for my father in the *Gentleman's Maga-*

zine; which I did not read then, or ever knew Johnson wrote till Johnson died, nor have looked at since. Johnson's blind Toryism and known brutality kept me aloof; nor did I ever exchange a syllable with him: nay, I do not think I ever was in a room with him six times in my days. The first time I think was at the Royal Academy. Sir Joshua said, 'Let me present Dr. Goldsmith to you'; he did. 'Now I will present Dr. Johnson to you.' 'No,' said I, 'Sir Joshua, for Dr. Goldsmith, pass—but you shall *not* present Dr. Johnson to me.' Some time after Boswell came to me, said Dr. J. was writing the *Lives of the Poets*, and wished I would give him anecdotes of Mr. Gray. I said, very coldly, I had given what I knew to Mr. Mason. B. hummed and hawed, and then dropped, 'I suppose you know Dr. J. does not admire Mr. Gray.' Putting as much contempt as I could into my look and tone, I said, 'Dr. Johnson don't!—humph!'—and with that monosyllable ended our interview. After the Doctor's death, Burke, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and Boswell sent an ambling circular-letter to me, begging subscriptions for a monument for him—the two last, I think, impertinently; as they could not but know my opinion, and could not suppose I would contribute to a monument for one who had endeavoured, poor soul! to degrade my friend's superlative poetry. I would not deign to write an answer; but sent down word by my footman, as I would have done to parish officers with a brief, that I would not subscribe. In the two new volumes Johnson says, and very probably did, or is made to say, that Gray's poetry is *dull*, and that he

was

was a *dull* man! The same oracle dislikes Prior, Swift, and Fielding. If an elephant could write a book, perhaps one that had read a great deal would say that an Arabian horse is a very clumsy, ungraceful animal. Pass to a better chapter!

Burke has published another pamphlet¹ against the French Revolution, in which he attacks it still more grievously. The beginning is very good; but it is not equal, nor quite so injudicious as parts of its predecessor; is far less brilliant, as well as much shorter: but, were it ever so long, his mind overflows with such a torrent of images, that he cannot be tedious. His invective against Rousseau is admirable, just, and new. Voltaire he passes almost contemptuously. I wish he had dissected Mirabeau too; and I grieve that he has omitted the violation of the consciences of the clergy, nor stigmatized those universal plunderers, the National Assembly, who gorge themselves with eighteen livres a day; which to many of them would, three years ago, have been astonishing opulence.

When you return I shall lend you three volumes in quarto of another work, with which you will be delighted. They are state letters in the reigns of Henry the Eighth, Mary, Elizabeth, and James; being the correspondence of the Talbot and Howard families, given by a Duke of Norfolk to the Heralds' office; where they have lain for a century neglected, buried under dust, and unknown, till discovered by a Mr. Lodge, a genealogist, who, to gratify his passion, procured to be made a Pursuivant. Oh, how curious they are! Henry
seizes

¹ Letter to a Member of the National Assembly.—T.

seizes an alderman who refused to contribute to a benevolence; sends him to the army on the Borders; orders him to be exposed in the front line; and if that does not do, to be treated with the utmost rigour of military discipline. His daughter Bess is not less a Tudor. The mean, unworthy treatment of the Queen of Scots is striking; and you will find how Elizabeth's jealousy of her crown and her avarice were at war, and how the more ignoble passion predominated. But the most amusing passage is one in a private letter, as it paints the awe of children for their parents a *little* differently from modern habitudes. Mr. Talbot, second son of the Earl of Shrewsbury, was a member of the House of Commons, and was married. He writes to the Earl his father, and tells him that a young woman of a very good character has been recommended to him for chambermaid to his wife, and if his Lordship does not disapprove of it, he will hire her. There are many letters of news, that are very entertaining too—but it is nine o'clock, and I must go to Lady Cecilia's.

Friday

The Conways, Mrs. Damer, the Farrens, and Lord Mount-Edgcumbe supped at the Johnstones'. Lord Mount-Edgcumbe said excellently, that 'Mademoiselle D'Éon is her own widow.' I wish I had seen you both in your court-*plis*, at your presentation; but that is only one wish amongst a thousand.

East winds and blights have succeeded our April spring, as you guessed, but though I have been at Strawberry every week, I have caught no cold, I kindly thank you. Adieu!

138. To Miss Mary Berry

[Aetat 73]

Strawberry Hill

June 14, 1791

I pity you! what a dozen or fifteen unentertaining letters are you going to receive! for here I am, unlikely to have anything to tell you worth reading. You had better come back incontinently—but pray do not prophesy any more; you have been the death of our summer, and we are in close mourning for it in coals and ashes. It froze hard last night: I went out for a moment to look at my haymakers, and was starved. The contents of an English June are hay and ice, orange-flowers and rheumatisms! I am now cowering over the fire. Mrs. Hobart had announced a rural breakfast at Sans-Souci last Saturday; nothing being so pastoral as a fat grandmother in a row of houses on Ham Common. It rained early in the morning: she dispatched post-boys, for want of cupids and zephyrs, to stop the nymphs and shepherds who tend their flocks in Pall Mall and St. James's Street; but half of them missed the couriers and arrived. Mrs. Montagu was more splendid yesterday morning, and breakfasted seven hundred persons on opening her great room, and the room with the hanging of feathers. The King and Queen had been with her last week. I should like to have heard the orations she had prepared on the occasion. I was neither city-mouse nor country-mouse. I did dine at Fulham on Saturday with the Bishop of London. Mrs. Boscawen, Mrs. Garrick, and Hannah More were

were there; and Dr. Beattie,¹ whom I had never seen. He is quiet, simple, and cheerful, and pleased me. There ends my tale, this instant Tuesday! How shall I fill a couple of pages more by Friday morning! Oh, ye ladies on the Common, and ye uncommon ladies in London, have pity on a poor gazetteer, and supply me with eclogues or royal panegyrics! Moreover—or rather more under—I have had no letter from you these ten days, though the east wind has been as constant as Lord Derby.² I say not this in reproach, as you are so kindly punctual; but as it stints me from having a single paragraph to answer. I do not admire specific responses to every article; but they are great resources on a dearth.

Madam de Boufflers is ill of a fever, and the Duchesse de Biron goes next week to Switzerland;—*mais qu'est-ce que cela vous fait?* I must eke out this with a few passages that I think will divert you from the heaviest of all books, Mr. Malone's Shakespeare, in ten thick octavos, with notes, that are an extract of all the opium that is spread through the works of all the bad playwrights of that age:—mercy on the poor gentleman's patience! Amongst his other indefatigable researches, he has discovered some lists of effects in the custody of the property-man to the Lord Admiral's company of players, in 1598. Of those effects he has given eight pages—you shall be off for a few items; viz. 'My Lord Caffè's (Caiaphas) gerchen (jerkin) and his hoose (hose); one rocke, one tombe, one Hellemought (Hell-mouth), two stepelles and one chyme of

¹ James Beattie (1735-1803), the poet, friend of Gray and Johnson.

² To Miss Farren.—T.

of belles, one chain of dragons, two coffenes, one bulle's head, one vylter, one goste's crown, and one frame for the heading in black Jone; one payer of stayers for Fayeton, and bowght a robe for to goo invisabell.' The pair of stairs for Phaeton reminds one of Hogarth's strollers dressing in a barn, where Cupid on a ladder is reaching Apollo's stockings, that are hanging to dry on the clouds; as the steeples do of a story in *L'Histoire du Théâtre François*: Jodelet, who not only wrote plays, but invented the decorations, was to exhibit of both before Henry the Third. One scene was to represent a view of the sea, and Jodelet had bespoken two *rochers*; but not having time to rehearse, what did he behold enter on either side of the stage, instead of two *rochers*, but two *clochers*! Who knows but my Lord Admiral bought *them*?

Thursday, 16th, Berkeley Square.

I am come to town for one night, having promised to be at Mrs. Buller's this evening with Mrs. Damer, and I believe your friend Mrs. Cholmeley, whom I have seen two or three times lately and like much. Three persons have called on me since I came, but have not contributed a tittle of news to my journal. If I hear nothing to-night, this must depart, empty as it is, to-morrow morning, as I shall to Strawberry; I hope without finding a new mortification, as I did last time. Two companies had been to see my house last week; and one of the parties, as vulgar people always see with the ends of their fingers, had broken off the end of my invaluable eagle's bill, and to conceal their mischief, had pocketed the piece. It is
true

true it had been restored at Rome, and my comfort is that Mrs. Damer can repair the damage—but did the fools know that? It almost provokes me to shut up one's house, when obliging begets injury!

Friday noon

We supped at Mrs. Buller's with only the four Edgescumbs and Jerningham, and this moment I receive your 35th, to which I have nothing to answer, but that I believe Fox and Burke are not very cordial; though I do not know whether there has been any formal reconciliation or not. The Parliament is prorogued; and we shall hear no more of them, I suppose, for some months; nor have I learnt anything new, and am returning to Strawberry, and must finish.

139. To Miss Mary Berry

[Ætæt 74]

Berkeley Square

Oct. 20, 1791

I wrote to you a very bit of a letter, but two days ago, in a great hurry from being in fear of being too late for the post from various clashing circumstances. This therefore is but the second part of that letter, or rather an explanation of it. I think I did tell you that I was come to town on a sudden, one of my footmen having pawned a little of my plate and run away—this was very true, and a woful story, as you will hear—but I had other motives. I have had for some time a very troublesome erysipelas on my left arm, which I had not only neglected, but had scratched so unmercifully, that it had become

a very serious affair. Mr. Gilchrist, my apothecary at Twickenham, is dangerously ill at Tunbridge—and on Monday I had a slight attack of the gout in my foot. Dreading to be laid up there where I had no assistance nor advice (with some other fears which *you* may guess), I determined to come away—and did—which has proved fortunate. Mr. Watson, my oracle, attends my arm, and it is so much better that, though with my foot on a stool the whole evening of yesterday, I passed it at Mrs. Damer's, and supped there with Lord and Lady Frederic Campbell, Mrs. and Miss Farren, Lord Derby, and Miss Jennings, and stayed there till past twelve—and to-day my foot is quite well and my arm getting well—but now comes the dreadful part of my story.

As I rose out of bed, Philip¹ told me he would not disturb my rest last night, but before I came home, a messenger had arrived from Strawberry to say that at five yesterday in the evening one of my gardener's men had in my wood-walk discovered my poor servant John's body hanged in a tree near the chapel and already putrefied! so he must have dispatched himself on the Friday morning on which he disappeared—I had then learnt to my astonishment that he had not even taken away his hat with him, and had dropped down from the library window, a dangerous height! All this it seems was occasioned by the housekeeper, as she always does, locking all the doors below as soon as she knows everybody is in bed—and thus he could not get his hat out of the servants' hall—if, poor soul! he did look for it—probably not!

This

¹ Walpole's valet.

This remain of shame and principle goes to my heart!—happily for me, I had not even mentioned to him the discovery that had been made of his pawning my plate, and Philip and Kirgate¹ had urged him in the kindest manner to confess it on Thursday evening, which he then would not—but a few hours afterwards owned it to the coachman, and told him he would go away. I since hear he had contracted other debts, and probably feared all would be found out—and he should be arrested and thrown into prison—by me I am sure he would not, for I had not even thought of discharging him—but should rather have tried by pardoning to reclaim him, for I do not think he was more than eighteen!² nay, on Thursday evening, after I knew the story, I had let him go behind my coach to Richmond as he used to do, and had not spoken a harsh word to him.

I beg your pardon for dwelling on this melancholy detail, but you may imagine how much it has affected me. It is fortunate for me I was absent from Strawberry when the body was found. Kirgate is gone thither this evening to meet the coroner to-morrow; the corpse was carried into my chapel in the garden—I shall certainly not return thither before Monday at soonest. My greatest comfort is that I cannot on the strictest inquiry find that even an angry word had been used towards the poor young man. I may be blamed for taking his fault so calmly—but I know how my concern would be aggravated if a bitter syllable from me had contributed to his despair!

I

¹ Walpole's printer and secretary.

² Walpole's depression may have been deepened by the similarities of this case to Chatterton's.

I have written all this, that you may know the exact situation of my mind, and because I conceal nothing from you, and lest from the abrupt conclusion of my last, you should suspect I was ill. I do assure you I have not the smallest sensation of pain anywhere, and my arm will be healed in two or three days, and now does not confine me at home. The impression of the unhappy accident will wear off, as I neither contributed to it, nor could foresee it nor prevent it. I talk of nothing else to you, because, except of you, as you see, and of your journey, I have for these five last days been occupied only by that adventure, and by my own arm. I write to Brussels still, as I compute that this must arrive there before you; but to-morrow or Saturday I shall hope for another letter; and amidst my distresses I am not insensible to the hope of November having a most happy era in store for me! Adieu! Adieu!

P. S. As I understand that you do not go to Basle, but have ordered the letters sent thither to meet you at Ausbourg, here are my dates, that you may know whether you receive all. To Venice, Sept. 6; to Basle, Sept. 12, 20, 27; to Ausbourg, Oct., 1, 14; to Brussels, 18, 20.

140. *To Miss Mary Berry*

[Aetat 74]

Dec. 11, 1791

You have hurt me excessively! We had passed a most agreeable evening, and then you poisoned all by one cruel word. I see you are too proud to like to be obliged by me, though you
see

see that my greatest, and the only pleasure I have left, is to make you and your sister a little happier if I can; and *now*, when it is a little more in my power, you cross me *in trifles even*, that would compensate for the troubles that are fallen on me. I thought my age would allow me to have a friendship that consisted in nothing but distinguishing merit—you allow the vilest of all tribunals, the newspapers, to decide how short a way friendship may go! ¹ Where is your good sense in this conduct? and will you punish me, because what you nor mortal being can prevent, a low anonymous scribbler, pertly takes a liberty with your name? I cannot help repeating that you have hurt me!

141. To Miss Mary Berry

[Ætæt 74]

I am in the utmost anxiety to know how you do. I dread lest what I meant kindly should have made you ill. I saw the struggle of both your noble minds in submitting to oblige me, and therefore all the obligation is on my side. You both have made the greatest sacrifice to me; I have made none to you—on the contrary, I relieve my own mind whenever I think I can ward off any future difficulty from you, though not a ten thousandth part of what I would do were it in my power. All I can say is, that you must know by your own minds how happy you have made mine, and sure you will not regret bestowing happiness on one so attached to you, and attached so reasonably

¹ One of the newspapers of the day had apparently suggested that the Berrys' friendship for Walpole was of an interested nature.—T.

reasonably; for where could I have made so just a choice, or found two such friends? What did I not feel for both! *Your* tears and Agnes's agitation, divided between the same nobleness, and her misery for your sufferings, which is ever awake, would attach me more to both, if that were possible. Dearest souls, do not regret obliging one so devoted to you—it is the only sincere satisfaction I have left; and be assured that till to-day, I have, though I said nothing, had nothing but anxiety since your father's illness, so impatient have I been for what I received but yesterday! Adieu!

142. *To John Pinkerton*

[Aetat 74]

Berkeley Square

Dec. 26, 1791¹

As I am sure of the sincerity of your congratulations, I feel much obliged by them, though what has happened destroys my tranquillity; and, if what the world reckons advantages could compensate the loss of peace and ease, would ill indemnify me, even by them. A small estate, loaded with debt, and of which I do not understand the management, and am too old to learn, a source of lawsuits amongst my near relations, though not affecting me; endless conversations with lawyers, and packets of letters to read every day and answer—all this weight of new business is too much for the rag of life that yet hangs about me, and was preceded by three weeks of anxiety about my unfortunate

¹ Walpole had just become fourth Earl of Orford through the death of his nephew.

tunate nephew, and a daily correspondence with physicians and mad-doctors, falling upon me when I had been out of order ever since July. Such a mass of troubles made me very seriously ill for some days, and has left me and still keeps me so weak and dispirited, that, if I shall not soon be able to get some repose, my poor head or body will not be able to resist. For the empty title, I trust you do not suppose it is anything but an encumbrance, by larding my busy mornings with idle visits of interruption, and which, when I am able to go out, I shall be forced to return. Surely no man of seventy-four, unless superannuated, can have the smallest pleasure in sitting at home in his own room, as I almost always do, and being called by a new name!

It will seem personal, and ungrateful too, to have said so much about my own *triste* situation, and not to have yet thanked you, Sir, for your kind and flattering offer of letting me read what you have finished of your History; but it was necessary to expose my position to you, before I could venture to accept your proposal, when I am so utterly incapable of giving a quarter of an hour at a time to what I know, by my acquaintance with your works, will demand all my attention, if I wish to reap the pleasure they are formed to give me. It is most true that for these seven weeks I have not read seven pages, but letters, states of accounts, cases to be laid before lawyers, accounts of farms, &c., &c., and those subject to mortgages. Thus are my mornings occupied: in an evening my relations and a very few friends come to me; and, when they are gone, I have about an hour to midnight to write answers to letters for
the

the next day's post, which I had not time to do in the morning. This is actually my case now. I happened to be quitted at ten o'clock, and would not lose the opportunity of thanking you, not knowing when I could command another hour.

I by no means would be understood to decline your obliging offer, Sir; on the contrary, I accept it joyfully, if you can trust me with your manuscript for a little time, should I have leisure to read it but by small snatches, which would be wronging you, and would break all connection in my head. Criticism you are too great a writer to want; and to read critically is far beyond my present power. Can a scrivener, or a scrivener's hearer, be a judge of composition, style, profound reasoning, and new lights and discoveries, &c.? But my weary hand and breast must finish. May I ask the favour of your calling on me any morning, when you shall happen to come to town? You will find the new-old Lord exactly the same admirer of yours.

143. *To the Countess of Upper Ossory*

[Aetat 74]

Strawberry Hill

June 27, 1792

The wet and cold weather has so retarded my recovery, Madam, that if Strawberry had had a dry thread to its back, and I had not been so unwell ever since I came hither, I should have proposed to your Ladyship and Lord Ossory to honour me with a visit—yet though that eternal weeper the month of June has certainly done me no good, I need not look beyond myself to account for my weakness. Almost half a century of
gout

gout, with the addition of a quarter of one, would undermine a stronger frame than mine; and if I live to have another fit, it will probably for the remnant confine me to my own house. As I can but just creep about, I have less reason than most people now to complain of the climate; and as I love to find out consolations, I have discovered that nature, as a compensation, has given us verdure and coal-mines in lieu of summer; and, as I can afford to keep a good fire, and have a beautiful view from my window, why should I complain? I do not wish to amble to Ham Common and be disappointed of a pastoral at Mrs. Hobart's. Poor lady! She has already miscarried of two fêtes of which she was big, and yet next minute she was pregnant of another. Those *fausses couches* and Mrs. Jordan's epistle to her, and daily as well as nightly robberies, have occasioned as much cackling in this district as if a thousand hen-roosts had been disturbed at once. Three coaches coming in society, with a horseman besides, from the play at Richmond, were robbed last week by a squadron of seven footpads, close to Mr. Cambridge's. If some check is not put to the hosts of banditti, Mr. T. Paine¹ will soon be able to raise as well-disciplined an army as he could wish. But how can I talk even of the outrages that one foresees in speculation, when one reads the recent accounts of those of the Tuileries.² What barbarity in the monsters of Paris not at once to massacre the King and Queen, who have suffered a thousand deaths for
three

¹ Thomas Paine (1737-1809), the American, author of *The Rights of Man*.

² On June 10 the Tuileries was attacked and captured by an armed mob. The king was insulted and was in great danger. He was saved partly by the intervention of some deputies popular with the people, and partly by his own coolness and courage.—T.

three years together, trembling for themselves, for their children, and for each other! I almost hate the Kings of Hungary and Prussia as much as the detestable Jacobins do, for not being already at the gates of Paris—ay, and while they suffer those wretches to exist, for conniving at the Tisiphone of the north! ¹ They tolerate a diabolic anarchy and countenance the destruction of the most amiable and most noble of all revolutions that ever took place. How can one make an option between monarchs and mobs!

Well! with all my lofty airs, so little is my mind, Madam, that I can turn from horror at mighty convulsions to indignation at puny spite and vulgar malice. How contemptible is the National Assembly! Not content with annihilating, vilifying, plundering and driving away their nobility, they have wreaked their paltry spleen on the title-deeds and genealogies of the old families, and deprived the exiles of the miserable satisfaction of knowing who were their ancestors. Yet it will not surprise me if, as after burning the Bastille, they have crammed Orleans with state prisoners, they should turn the galleys into a Heralds' Office, and, like Cromwell, create Hewson the cobbler, and such heroes, dukes and peers!

Thursday

I was interrupted yesterday, Madam, and am now going to London, not as you kindly advise, because Berkeley Square is wholesomer than the country (for *to-day* the weather is brave and shining, and what for want of sterling summer, one may call

¹ The Empress's designs on Poland were tolerated by Prussia and Austria, both of whom were to profit by a further partition.—T.

call—almost—hot); but to receive money; which I have not done yet from my estate, or rather for selling one; out of the wreck of my nephew's fortune. Some lands that he had bought in the Fens, to *adorn* the parsonage-hovel that he inhabited at Eriswell, escaped and fell to me—by not being entailed, or pocketed, or remembered, and I have sold them for two thousand guineas. This will not enrich me, but will pay a fine for church lands that I must renew, in addition to the encumbrances charged on me for repayment of my own fortune and my brother's; the latter of which I certainly did not receive, nor either of us either, till precisely forty years after they had been bequeathed! How little did I think of ever being master of fen-lands and church lands, the latter of which I always abominated, and did not covet the former! I betray my ignorance in figures and calculations on every transaction; but, thank my stars, can laugh at myself, as much as I suppose my lawyers and agents do at me, especially when I tell them I care not how little I receive, provided my new wealth does not draw my private fortune into debt, which I have destined to those who will want it; and therefore I still crawl about with my pair of horses, and will not add a postillion, till at the end of the year I shall know whether I really am to receive anything or not. This is the sum of my worldly prudence, Madam, and I am as indifferent about the balance of the estate, as I was about the title of (though not of being your Ladyship's ever devoted servant)

ORFORD.

Oh

144. *To the Rev. Robert Nares*¹

[Aetat 74]

Strawberry Hill

Sept. 12, 1792

Oh, Sir, what horrible tragedies since I had the pleasure of seeing you! I would write in red ink, as only suitable to such deeds, would it not look like using a Parisian dagger—a second and a third St. Bartélemi in the same town!—and the same town to have plunged into such an ocean of blood after wading through three years of gore! Every day refines on the barbarity of the former. On the 4th of August seven thousand persons at least were murdered—the tigers could not rest a full month: on the third of this they butchered four thousand defenceless prisoners² of both sexes, all untried, and all confined by jealousy and suspicion—amongst these were 120 conscientious priests, whose sole crime was to have preferred beggary to perjury—too familiar to the perpetrators, who enforce new oaths to every new-fangled system, and consequently are every time perjured. Amongst the victims was the good old Cardinal de la Rochefoucault,³ past fourscore, and the Archbishop of Arles, guilty of the same virtues.

The

¹ Robert Nares (1753-1829), at this time chaplain to the Duke of York, and Assistant Preacher at Lincoln's Inn. Nares was afterwards Archdeacon of Strafford and Canon of Lichfield. In 1793 he established the *British Critic*. He was also successively Assistant Librarian and Keeper of MSS. at the British Museum. He published his well-known *Glossary* in 1822.—T.

² The number of the victims of the 'Journées de Septembre' is exaggerated by Walpole. One thousand eighty-nine persons appear to have been massacred in Paris, including 200 priests.—T.

³ Walpole was mistaken as to the Cardinal Dominique de la Rochefoucauld, who emigrated after the '10th of August.' He was at this time seventy-nine years of age, and died in 1800. Two prelates of the La Rochefoucauld family, however, were

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The ferocity that assassinated the Princess de Lamballe,¹ is unexampled. In her terror she lost her senses—the monsters paused till she came to herself, that she might feel the whole of her sufferings! The epilogue to her martyrdom was scarce less horrible. They forced the King and Queen to stand at the window and behold the trunkless head on a pike!—and this, in that delicate Paris, that has always reproached our theatre with being too sanguinary—oh no, to be sure they required that our actors and actresses should commit actual murders on the stage. Perhaps you suppose that barbarity's invention has been exhausted—by no means—at least in the newest edition of the Jacobin Code, it is said, 'When thou committest murder, add the luxury of making the nearest relations of the sufferer witnesses to his sufferings'—accordingly, the Duc de la Rochefoucault, one of the most zealous patriarchs of the Revolution, growing shocked at the increasing enormities, quitted the party last July, and was retired with his family to the seat of his mother the Duchesse d'Anville, who had also been a staunch republican. Jacobin vengeance and Jacobin emissaries pursued him thither, and butchered him and his nephew, a youth—but previously compelled the Duke's mother and wife, this to behold her husband, the other her son and grandson, murdered before their eyes.

My pen is weary of recounting such hellish enormities—many of which you probably knew before—but I repeat them
to

massacred during the 'Journées de Septembre'—François Joseph de la Rochefoucauld-Bayers (b. 1735), Bishop of Beauvais, and his brother, Pierre Louis, Bishop of Saintes.—T.

¹She was murdered in the prison of La Force.—T.

to whet your indignation—you~~a~~ promised me to renew your honest labours—but your pen you must dip in gall. Before, you wrote with temper and moderation, and the dulled public had no taste left for excellent sense and judgement. You must strike to make them feel, and lenitives will not work on the populace, who swallow poisons every day from Jacobin agents both French and domestic. It is the duty of every honest man to impress a sense of these horrors as much as he can, especially before servants at table, that they may have arguments to combat the enemy. Retail my facts, but do not let my letter be seen out of your own hands, nor would I by any means have you own what you write—Jacobins have long pikes as well as stilettos, and I will indubitably not counsel you to do what I would not do myself, who am with most sincere esteem and admiration,

Dear Sir,

Your obedient humble servant

ORFORD.

145. *To the Countess of Upper Ossory*

[Aetat 75]

Strawberry Hill

Dec. 7, 1792

Your Ladyship has made me smile beyond my Lord Chesterfield's^s allowed simper, by sending me to take my seat in the House of Lords out of tenderness for my character; if serious,

I

I should not doubt your sincerity; but as you can look grave and soften your voice, when you have a mind to banter your friends, I rather think you were willing to try whether I have the lurking vanity of supposing myself of any importance. Indeed I have not; on the contrary, I know that having determined never to take that unwelcome seat, I should only make myself ridiculous, by fancying it could *signify* a straw whether I take it or not. If I have anything of character, it must dangle on my being consistent. I quitted and abjured Parliament near thirty years ago: I never repented, and I will not contradict myself now. It is not in the House of Lords that I will *rise* again; I will keep my dry bones for the general review day. A good lady¹ last year was delighted at my becoming a peer, and said, 'I hope you will get an Act of Parliament for putting down faro.' As if *I* could make Acts of Parliament! and could I, it would be very consistent too in me, who for some years played more at faro than anybody.

A wholesome spirit is arisen, and no wonder. The French have given warnings enough to property to put it on its guard. I have been too precipitate in my predictions, and therefore am cautious of conjecturing; yet, if my reasoning was too quick, it was not ill-founded; and as famine is striding over France, delusion's holiday will stop short, and give place to bitter scenes at its native home, which may save Europe from returning to primitive desolation. Abominable as the government of France was, it is plain that speculative philosophers

were

¹ The learned Mrs. Carter.—T.

were the most unfit of all men to produce a salutary reformation. The French, by antecedent, as well as by recent proofs, have never been fit to be *unchained at once*, so innate is their savage barbarity. What ignorance of human nature to proclaim to twenty-four millions of people, that all laws are impositions; and what medium have those mad dictators¹ been able to find between laws and the violence of force? They will experience the reign of the latter; and perhaps go through all the revolutions of military despotism that have afflicted Egypt for so many ages. If my memory does not fail me, the *shepherd* kings of that country, who I suppose were *philosophers*, were the first tyrants deposed. Accustomed to cut the throats of their sheep, and versed in nothing but star-gazing, and hoisted from poverty to power, I do not wonder they applied their butchering knife to their subjects, and massacred away, that the rest of their people and flocks might have fairer equality of pasture. Condorcet² is just such a shepherd.

The city of London does not seem at all disposed to be reformed by the *Académies de Sciences et de Belles-Lettres*. I always thought those tribunals most impertinent; but did not just conceive that they would spawn legions of Huns and Vandals; but extremes meet, and incense and assassination have sprung out of the same dunghill! The servility and gross adulation of that nation persuaded their kings that they were
all

¹ Robespierre, Marat, Danton, and Collot-d'Herbois were the most prominent persons in France at this time.—T.

² Jean Antoine Nicolas de Caritat (1743-1794), Marquis de Condorcet, celebrated as a geometrician. He was arrested in April 1794, and committed suicide in prison.—T.

allotted to her as defamatory spies, 'Had she assumed too much dignity, as she passed to her trial, for she had noticed one of the furies, who said, "How proud she is"?' It proved her unaltered presence of mind, and that she was ready to condescend, if it would better become her. What hero, philosopher, or martyr had equal possession of himself in similar moments? None, none, not one! And then recollect the length of her sufferings, her education, exaltation to happiness, and supreme power, her sudden fall, the disappointments she had met, the ingratitude and treachery she had experienced, the mortifications and insults heaped upon her, and studiously, maliciously, aggravated for five years together; the murder of husband, the miseries of and terrors for her children: the total deprivation of all decent comforts, and, perhaps the greatest cruelty of all, not to have had one friend; but a thousand times worse, to have been at every moment in the hands of the most unfeeling jailors. Sum up all this mass of woes, and perhaps thousands more of which we never heard, and then see this phoenix rise superior to hosts of torturing spiteful fiends, and hear her pronounce the most sublime word that ever passed through human lips. When *they* (I have no adequate epithet for them) had declared sentence and asked her what she had to say, she said, 'Rien.' Too calm, too sensible, too collected, and unshaken, she was above fear, indignation, and solicitation, and accountable only to herself, she showed that such a host of miscreants was not worthy of knowing a syllable of what passed in perhaps the greatest mind that ever existed. Her invincible patience was all that appeared, and that was a negative, but as
unvaried

unvaried as all her illustrious virtues and great qualities, on which rancour and persecution have not been able to fix a speck of stain—let history or legend produce a similar model!

These are the effusions of my heart, not dictated by the impulse of the moment, but the result of my cool reflections of three days. I trust them in perfect confidence to your honour, and exact from the fidelity of your friendship that you will not communicate nor read them to any mortal but your father and sister, nor let this paper pass out of your own hands, nor suffer a tittle of it to be transcribed. I like that you two should know my sentiments on all important topics, but I extend this confidence not a jot farther. I firmly believe every word I have asserted, because all the facts come from the barbarians themselves—but as I cannot be positively sure they are true I will not place my veracity on a possibility of having been misinformed, and therefore I depend on your not committing me by showing my letter—I repeat it earnestly, *to nobody but your father and sister*, and beg you will assure me that you have not. I do not mind your reading trifles out of my dispatches, though certainly calculated for nobody but you two—but this letter I do most seriously restrain from all other eyes.

Tuesday, midnight.

Mrs. Damer came to me at dinner to-day, and goes to London to-morrow. I was engaged to Lady Betty Mackinsy, and she went thither with me in the most deplorable of all nights—as bad as that when the Conways and I were detained so late as Cliveden and I stepped over my shoes into the water.

We

We heard nothing quite new: Nieuport is reckoned safe and Ostend safer, both which were reported taken. Mr. Batt, whom I met last night at Cambridge's, is as confident of the safety of Toulon. He, not Lord Hood, inquired much after you. Lord Mount-Edgumbe is recovered. The *Charming man*¹ has actually a tragedy just coming forth at Covent Garden.²

I like your account of yourselves, but hope your grandam will not *sit too close*, but let you both have air and exercise enough. *In everything else* I quite agree with her.

Lady Waldegrave and her daughter come to me to-day from the Pavilions, where they have been this week, and will stay till next morning. Good night.

P. S. I fear you have lost your poor friend Mr. Sept. West.

147. *To the Hon. Henry Seymour Conway*³

[Ætæt 77]

Strawberry Hill

July 7, 1795

I am not dead of fatigue with my royal visitors, as I expected to be, though I was on my poor lame feet three whole hours. Your daughter,⁴ who kindly assisted me in doing the honours, will

¹ Jerminham.

² Edward Jerminham's tragedy *The Siege of Berwick* was produced on Dec. 13, 1793.—T.

³ This was Horace Walpole's last letter to Marshal Conway, who died suddenly at Park Place between four and five o'clock on the morning of July 9, 1795. The cause of his death was an attack of cramp in the stomach, caused (as his daughter, Mrs. Damer, stated in a letter to Miss Berry) by his imprudence in exposing himself to cold and damp.—T.

⁴ Mrs Damer.

will tell you the particulars, and how prosperously I succeeded. The Queen was uncommonly condescending and gracious, and deigned to drink my health when I presented her with the last glass, and to thank me for all my attentions. Indeed my memory *de vieille cour* was but once in default. As I had been assured that her Majesty would be attended by her Chamberlain, yet was not, I had no glove ready when I received her at the step of her coach: yet she honoured me with her hand to lead her upstairs; nor did I recollect my omission when I led her down again. Still, though gloveless, I did not squeeze the royal hand, as Vice-Chamberlain Smith did to Queen Mary.

You will have stared, as I did, at the Elector of Hanover deserting his ally the King of Great Britain, and making peace with the monsters. But Mr. Fawkeners, whom I saw at my sister's on Sunday, laughs at the article in the newspapers, and says it is not an unknown practice for stock-jobbers to hire an emissary at the rate of five hundred pounds, and dispatch to Franckfort, whence he brings forged attestations of some marvellous political event, and spreads it on 'Change, which produces such a fluctuation in the stocks as amply overpays the expense of his mission.

This was all I learnt in the single night I was in town. I have not read the new French constitution, which seems longer than probably its reign will be. The five sovereigns will, I suppose, be the first guillotined. Adieu!

Yours ever,

O.

You

148. To Miss Mary Berry

[Ætæt 78]

Wednesday, Nov. 4th, 1795

You commanded me, mighty princess, to write to you, and said I write best when I 'have nothing to say'—no flattery to the moments when I have nothing to relate. However, were the case so, this letter would be perfection! Lord Rochester, indeed, thought nonentity so fruitful a subject that he wrote an ode on *Nothing* (though he generally chose more productive themes), and I think called *Nothing* the elder brother of *Shade*, which I apprehend was false genealogy, for though they might be twins, I should suppose Master *Light* appeared before Master *Shade*, and that the pre-Adamite *Nothing* was only a false conception. I therefore, who am a rigid genealogist, shall attempt to deduce no progeny from a miscarriage; though I could point out a suitable match for that non-apparent heir, *Nothing*, in my own Princess Royal who never was born.¹ I will wait till I see a precedent of unconsummated marriages producing issue.

Thursday 5th

You!—you are no more a judge of what makes a good letter than Dame Piozzi, who writes bad English when she ought to be exactly accurate, but mistakes vulgarisms for synonyms to

¹ An allusion to the second of Walpole's *Hieroglyphic Tales* (see *Works* of Lord Orford, vol. iv., pp. 330-3).—T.

to elegancies. Hear the oracle Lear—not in Ireland's spurious transcript—

Nothing can come of Nothing—speak again.

So I will, when I really have anything to say. At present, not finding the inspirer *Nothing* very procreative, I shall only tell you that I have a little gout in my right foot, and though I had ordered the coach for Cliveden last night, I could not go, nor shall to Lady Betty's to-night; though I am easier to-day, and think it will not be a fit, but I shall propose to my Agnes and Co. to come to me. She has been here, and will come, and sends you this enclosed. Adieu!

149. *To the Countess of Upper Ossory*

[Aetat 79]

Jan. 15, 1797

My dear Madam,—You distress me infinitely by showing my idle notes, which I cannot conceive can amuse anybody. My old fashioned breeding impels me every now and then to reply to the letters you honour me with writing, but in truth very unwillingly, for I seldom can have anything particular to say; I scarce go out of my own house, and then only to two or three very private places, where I see nobody that really knows anything, and what I learn comes from newspapers, that collect intelligence from coffee-houses, consequently what I neither believe nor report. At home I see only a few charitable elders, except about fourscore nephews and nieces of various ages, who are each brought to me about once a year, to stare at me as the

Methusalem

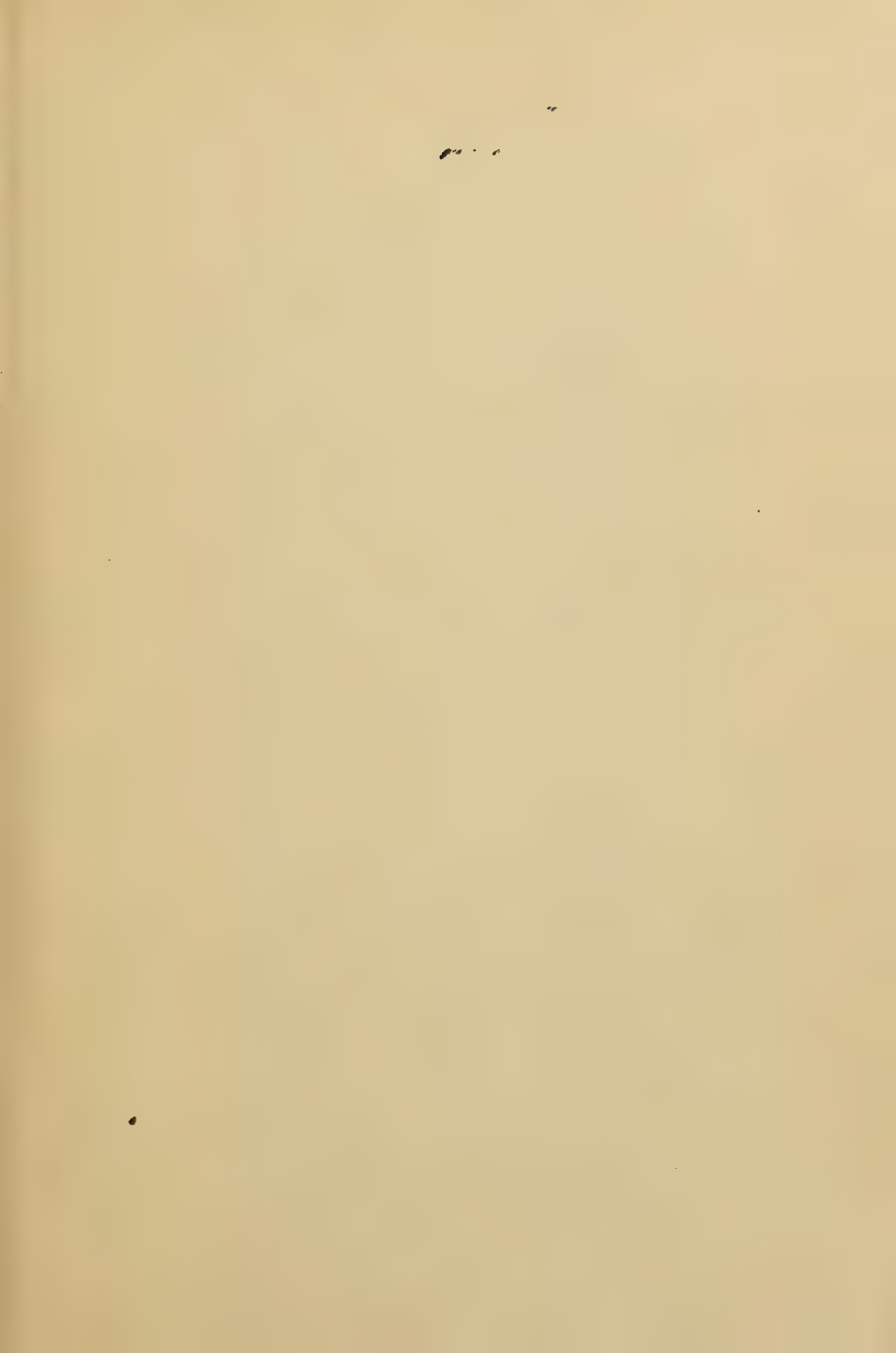
Methusalem of the family, and they can only speak of their own cotemporaries, which interest me no more than if they talked of their dolls, or bats and balls. Must not the result of all this, Madam, make me a very entertaining correspondent? And can such letters be worth showing? or can I have any spirit when so old and reduced to dictate?

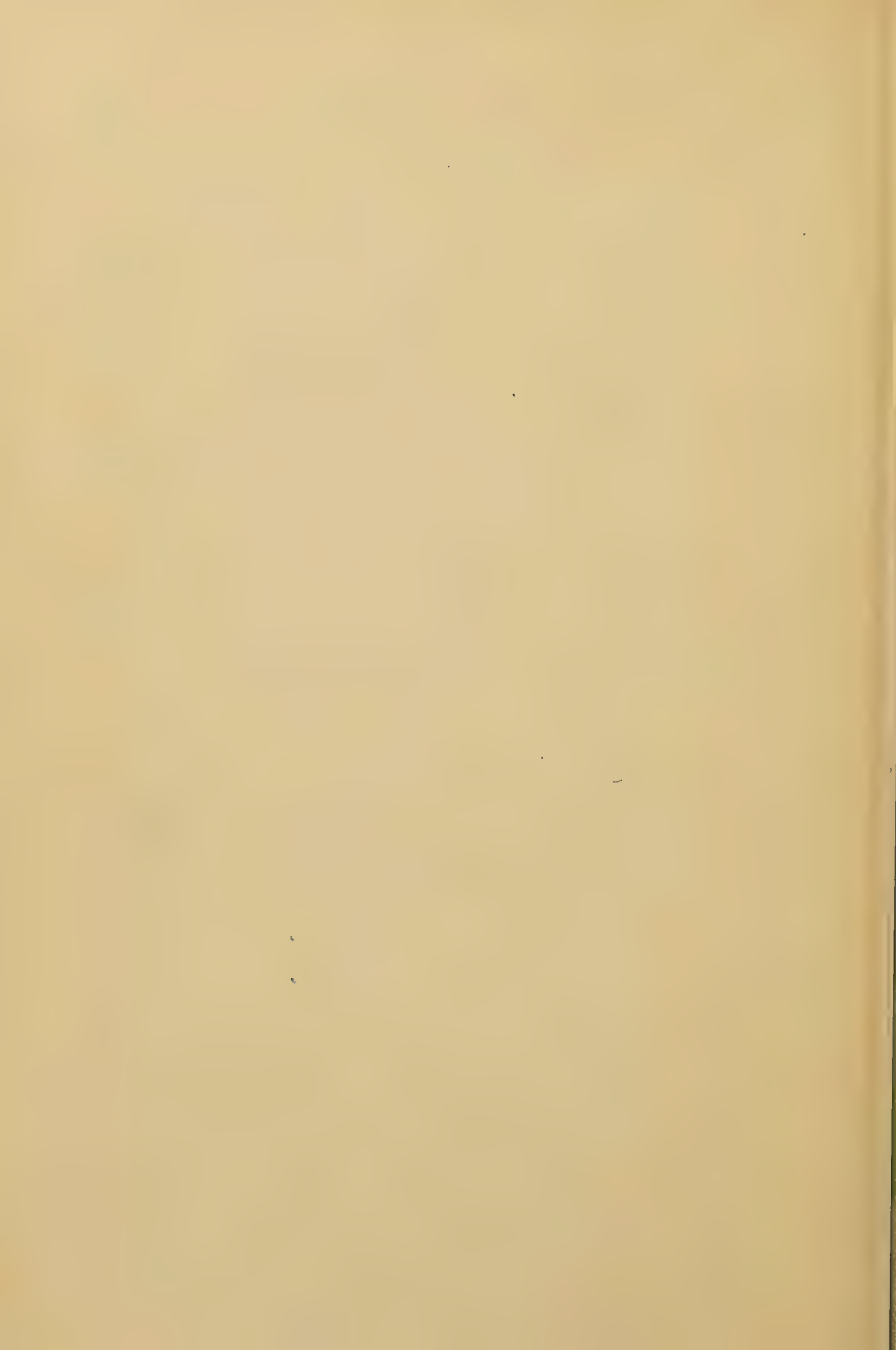
Oh, my good Madam, dispense with me from such a task, and think how it must add to it to apprehend such letters being shown. Pray send me no more such laurels, which I desire no more than their leaves when decked with a scrap of tinsel and stuck on twelfth-cakes that lie on the shop-boards of pastry-cooks at Christmas. I shall be quite content with a sprig of rosemary thrown after me, when the parson of the parish commits my dust to dust. Till then, pray, Madam, accept the resignation of your

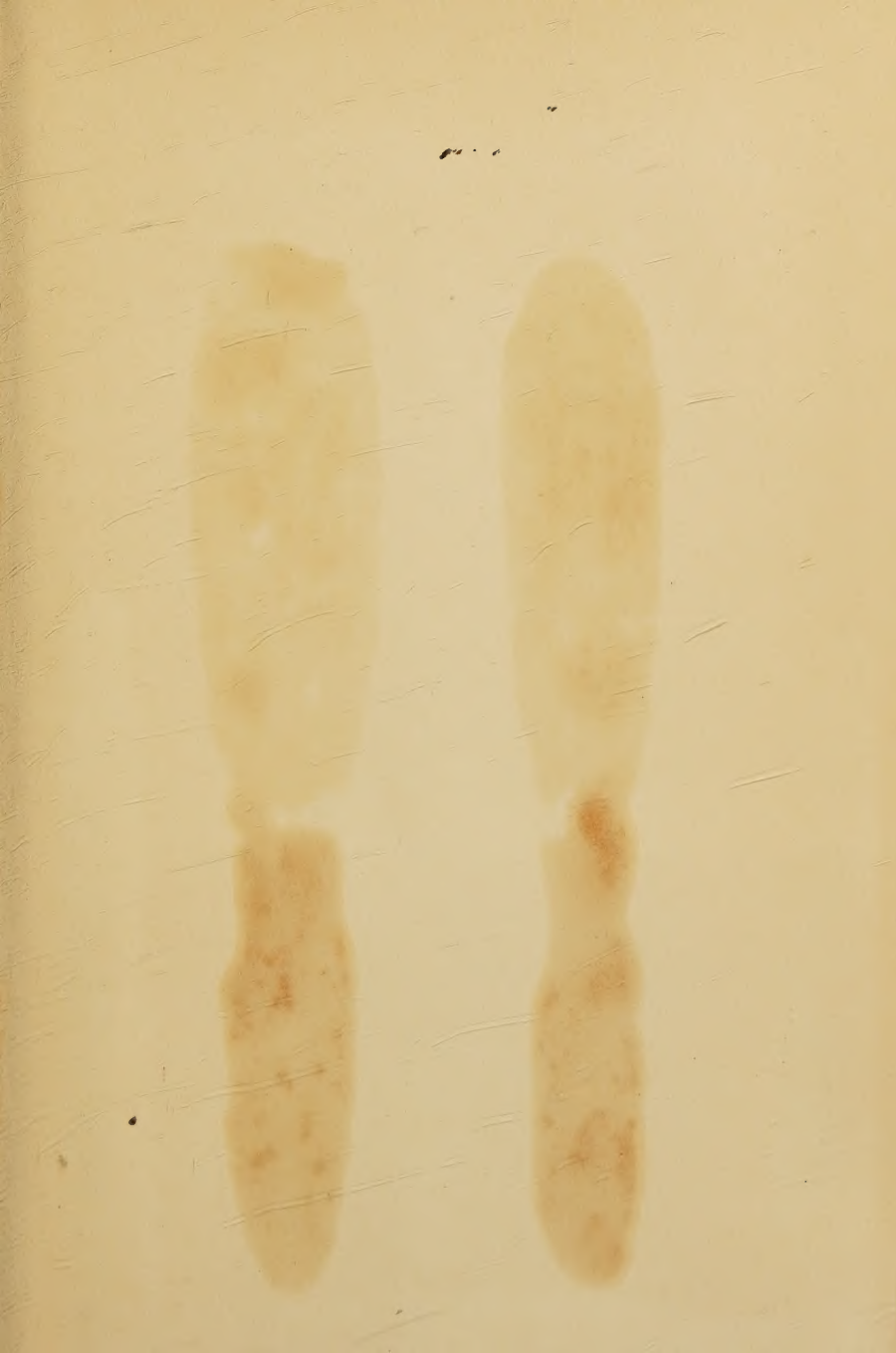
Ancient servant,

O.¹

¹ Walpole died six weeks following the date of this letter. It is interesting to note from the original letter that although at the time he was dying he arranged to have it returned to him.







A

Walpole, Horace.

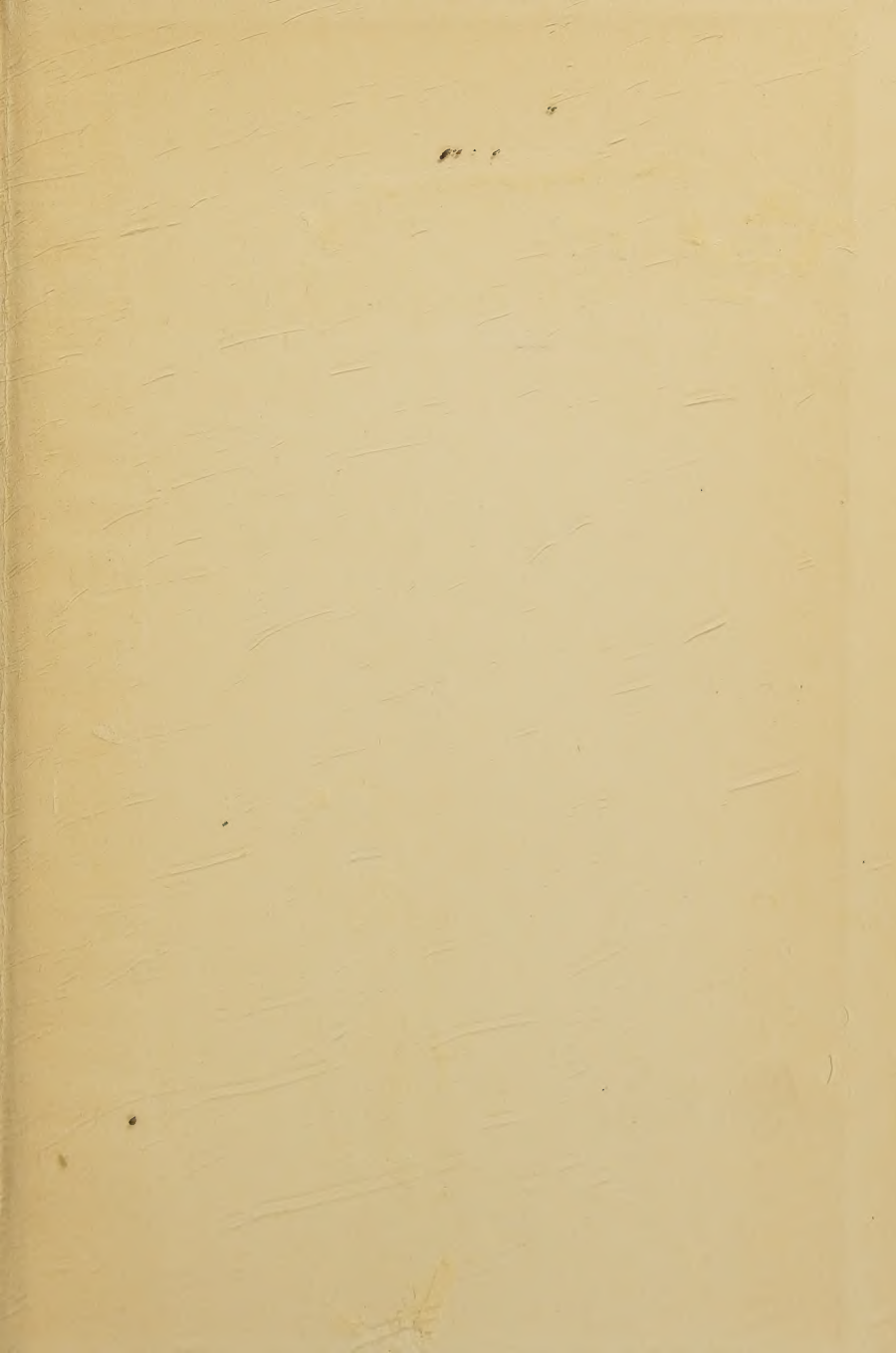
A selection of

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